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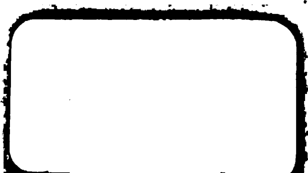

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME II.

FROM JULY 6, 1889, TO DECEMBER 28, 1889.

Including No. 27 *to No.* 52.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT 26, WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

1889.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 27.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 6, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER IX. MRS. OLIVER.

THE Olivers had lived at Middleton a little more than a year; nothing definite was known to their discredit, yet not a single member of Mrs. Oliver's own sex had ever called upon her. Nobody could deny her beauty; and, if a husband or a brother were missing, it saved trouble to seek for him in her direction. So that the married women declared she was "really not respectable," whilst the married men (or some of them) wished that their own immaculate spouses were in some ways more like her.

The name of Captain Oliver's former regiment was a well-kept secret; a few of the wilder bachelor spirits spent an occasional evening at his house, as report said, to leave it with their heads full and their pockets empty.

To declare anybody an outcast was to win Clement Northcott's sympathy for him at once; yet it was not without certain qualms of conscience that he set out upon his walk to the Nook on Tuesday evening.

The house was on the outskirts of the town, not very far from the Rectory; a small villa, almost a shooting-box, built of stone quarried in the neighbourhood, with a paddock and stable adjoining. The furniture was scanty and inferior; but hunting-whips, walking-sticks, and conveniences for smokers abounded, whilst Mrs. Oliver herself was the only object of beauty the house contained.

"I am so sorry," she said, as she greeted Clement, "but my husband has just wired to say he cannot reach home until half-past nine. Do you think you can exist in my society until then?"

Although he was the only guest, she had dressed herself elaborately to receive him; and Clement, more accustomed to the society of his own sex, was not sorry when the tête-à-tête dinner was nearly over.

"Don't you think I am the most amiable creature in the world?" she asked, when the servant had left the room, "I am sure I ought to be hugely offended with you."

"I hope I have done nothing very heinous," he answered absently, for his thoughts had wandered as far as Eastwood.

"That only aggravates the offence," she laughed. "Here am I, entitled to your whole attention, yet half the time I am wasting my words of wisdom upon you, your thoughts are running—upon whom shall I say?"

"I am awfully sorry—really I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Oh, pray don't let me frighten you; only don't flatter yourself you can deceive me. We only put up with that kind of thing from our liege lords, and then our blindness is half assumed. So you really admire that style of face! You see I am not offering to leave you, but I don't mean to deprive you of your privileges for all that. Captain Oliver will not be long now. Come into the conservatory, and you may have a cigar if you like."

He followed her into a small glass box built out from the drawing-room, and full to suffocation of strongly-scented flowers, when she insisted that he should light a cigar.

"Mr. Northcott," she said, as she stood in the doorway, leaning against its side with one arm above her head, whilst the

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other toyed with a rose at her breast, "that dark cousin of yours has a will of her own. She will rule you with a rod of iron some day."

"I should like to take the risk," he replied, beginning to feel more at home.

"There is a confession of faith, and not in me! Well, there isn't a single trace of jealousy in my composition. It is well for my peace of mind it is so. You shall make me your confidante. Is it a bargain? Come up here as often as you like, and I will promise to listen to a catalogue of her virtues. It will do you good, poor fellow, and me also. I have often longed to cheer you a little during the last month. You go about looking so desolate, and you used to be such a happy-looking boy. Oh! don't look so cross; you are a boy after all, you know, and I—I am old enough to be your mother."

This reference to Brownie seemed to Clement almost to hallow his visit. Did not Dr. Faust and Mephistopheles discuss the nature and attributes of the Deity? Not that Mrs. Oliver had any recognised Mephistophelian motives at this time. For the moment, her only wish was to please Clement. She desired companionship, and that of her own sex being for some inscrutable reason denied to her, she sought refuge with the other, which, she would frankly admit, was infinitely to be preferred.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Captain Oliver.

"Very sorry, Northcott," he began; "couldn't help it, 'pon my honour. I hope Mrs. Oliver hasn't bored you. What are you boxed up here for? You can just as well smoke in the drawing-room. We don't mind it."

No greeting whatever passed between the husband and wife, who might have been separated but five minutes instead of five days. Everything about Captain Oliver was subdued and unpronounced, except the strong odour of cigars, which always accompanied him. His features were well-formed, they were as neatly put together as his clothes, and as little striking. He was neither tall nor short, fat nor thin, fair nor dark; his drawling voice was slowest when he was most excited.

Resisting all Mrs. Oliver's entreaties to partake of food, he demanded brandy-and-sodawater, and before he had been half-an-hour in the house, suggested a game of écarté.

"I am good for anything you like," said Clement, "only Mrs. Oliver——"

"Always prefers to read," was the answer. "Belle," he continued to his wife, "you look tired; don't sit up longer than you like. Northcott will excuse you."

She took up a book with so weary an air, that it was hard to believe she was the same woman who had entertained Clement earlier in the evening.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, presently; "it is eleven o'clock! How long does it take you to walk home, Mr. Northcott?"

"I don't think there is much damage done," said Clement, rising to take his leave on receiving the hint.

"You must not think of running away yet," was Oliver's very slow answer. "Why don't you take a pitch here for to-night? Our spare room is at your service, and I can drive you into Middleton to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Oliver did not second the invitation, but, judging by the cordiality she had displayed before her husband's arrival, Clement could not think his presence would be unwelcome; so, although he had no wish to continue the game—his pockets having been nearly empty to begin with—he adopted Captain Oliver's proposal.

Mrs. Oliver was the first to appear in the breakfast-room the next morning, Captain Oliver arriving next. But, although she looked bewitching in her white robe, he made no attempt to salute her.

"You treated me scurvily last night," he said, by way of beginning the new day.

"It is such folly," she answered. "You leave me alone in this desert of a place, and when you do come down, you do all you can to prevent me from making my way."

"So you wished to make use of the young fool yourself, did you? Do you think he is likely to blab to every one he meets that he lost a hundred to me last night? For that matter nobody would listen to him. People will no more look at him than they will at you."

"What is the use of playing with him? If he does lose—and of course you take good care of that—if he does lose he can't pay."

"Don't you think he can write his own name as well as his father's?" sneered Oliver. "I wish I had a hat full of his bills. His step-mother will never let him want, you take your oath. Look here, Belle, you tried to interfere with me last night. Let us have no more of that; it

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will do him no good, and you a great deal of harm. Give me a free hand, and take one yourself."

"Oh, I know you don't care," she said; "it was different a few years ago."

"Of course it was. A man gets tired of anything if it is served up daily. I was a fool, and I am paying for my folly. Only mark this, Belle, don't interfere with me, and I won't interfere with you. I mean to teach Northcott my lesson, and you may teach him yours if you like."

"Very well," she said, pressing her red lips close together, so that the expression of her face was entirely altered.

But as Clement entered at the moment, she was able to receive him with one of her brightest smiles, whilst nothing could have been more quietly cordial than the greeting bestowed upon him by Captain Oliver.

CHAPTER X. DANGEROUS GROUND.

Two days later—on the Thursday afternoon — Clement was once more waiting outside Mrs. Clow's cottage; to meet only disappointment. He was on his way back to his lodgings over Mr. Staite's shop, in the High Street, when, as ill-luck would have it, he met Mrs. Oliver. Raising his hat, he would have continued his way, but she drew her horse across his path and laughingly prevented him.

"What have I done, pray, that you don't stop to enquire after my health, and my husband, and all my other invaluable possessions, Mr. Northcott?"

"I hope Captain Oliver is quite well," he replied, somewhat moodily.

"Do you? Then you don't look like it. You look as if you wish he was far from well. Why were you so stupid as to play? I hate the name of a card. Well, he is not at home now, at any rate. I am all alone, and it is so dull. You look dismal, too. Can't we console one another? How is the dark cousin, by-the-bye?"

Vexed that she should have divined his annoyance at his loss at cards, but, rendered tractable by the talisman of Brownie's name, he told Mrs. Oliver of his disappointment.

"Poor boy, so that's what spoils his pretty temper! Now, if you will come up to the Nook to-morrow afternoon, I will provide myself with all the latest intelligence. Never fear, I shall keep my word," she concluded, and, having obtained his promise, she cantered gaily away.

He reached the house at four o'clock on the morrow, and, faithful to her part of the agreement, Mrs. Oliver was able to tell him that Brownie had been detained at home by a slight indisposition. Clement remained to another tête-à-tête dinner that evening, and having nothing to do on the following Sunday, found his way once more to Mrs. Oliver's house.

At last another looked-for Thursday came round. No disappointment was in store for Clement to-day; for there was Brownie standing at Mrs. Clow's door, just as though she had been expecting him. But she declined to take the field-path again; she liked the road so much better, she said.

"I have been wondering why you left us so suddenly last time, Clement," she began presently. "Do you know that you did not even say good-bye? I dare say," she added, looking tenderly into his face, "I dare say you feel out of humour with all the world sometimes. I do myself, when I think what a shame it is."

Clement had intended to tell Brownie of his new friendship with Mrs. Oliver; but somehow he could not bring himself to make what he felt would be almost a confession out there in the open lane, where they might be interrupted at any moment.

"Uncle Walter is really going away for a little while at last," she continued. "He is to stay in London for a week. Do you know I have a kind of presentiment about this journey. I feel sure that something will come of it."

"I would not give much for your presentiment, Brownie. Now, confess that you expected to make some grand discovery long before now."

"Yes, I did," she answered, sadly; "and yet I have done nothing."

"No, and you never will do anything. Give up the attempt, Brownie. You have only to say the word, and I will soon put distance enough between myself and Middleton."

"But I am not hopeless because I have not been successful so soon as I expected, Clement; far, far from that. I am positive, certain, that before the six months have gone you will become Henry's partner."

"A tempting prospect!" he exclaimed. "Hullo," he added, coming to a standstill, "there is Anderson, Brownie. So this was your reason for preferring the lane to the fields!"

Whereupon she turned her sorrowful

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dark eyes upon his angry face, and he saw that his words had gone home.

But although he knew he was acting like a brute, the knowledge made him only the more annoyed with himself, with her, and the rest of the world. He would have laid down his life to shield her from evil; but to keep back his reproaches now was more difficult than to lay down his life.

"Mind this," he said, "you will have to choose between us. You can go with Anderson, or with me. You cannot go with both. You must please yourself, and take your choice."

"Oh, Clement," she cried, pitifully, "it is not fair; I cannot be rude to Mr. Anderson."

Before she had finished speaking, the object of Clement's wrath was standing with outstretched hand in front of her; and Brownie, who disliked to utter a word which might cause the slightest pain to any human being, found herself in an awkward dilemma. There stood Anderson, cool and self-possessed as ever, entirely unconscious of the anger his presence had aroused; and there Clement, his cane dealing destruction to hundreds of nettles, his face aflame, his blood boiling.

Save for the song of the full-throated lark above their heads, no voice was to be heard; and Brownie devoutly wished for the moment that she, too, might look down upon her friends from a similar exalted position.

For she must cause pain to one of them; Clement had so ordained it.

"I think I—Mr. Anderson will see me home," she murmured, hardly knowing what she said. "Are you going towards Eastwood, Mr. Anderson?"

Yes, he was; although, strange to say, his back had been towards it not many minutes before. Brownie held out her hand timidly, but Clement appeared to overlook it, and once more left her without a word of farewell.

"I ought to see Mrs. Northcott this afternoon," said Anderson, walking slowly by Brownie's side. "So your cousin—Miss Northcott—does not always accompany you upon your charitable errand?"

However Brownie might enjoy his society as a rule, on this occasion her thoughts would keep flying to Clement. She was ready to make almost any sacrifice for him, yet it seemed that she could not spend an hour in his society without causing him annoyance. It never used to be so. What had happened to disturb their former good fellowship?

"I am very glad you met my niece, Mr. Anderson," said Mrs. Northcott, as they entered the drawing-room at Eastwood together, "there are so many tramps about just now that it really is hardly safe for girls to go out alone."

"I was not alone, Auntie," exclaimed Brownie, "I met Clement, so that I should have been perfectly safe even if there had been any danger."

Mrs. Northcott was annoyed at this, declaring her most emphatic disapproval of such meetings until Brownie left the room. But as soon as Anderson had gone, Maud came to her cousin's defence.

"I hope you will not forbid Brownie to meet Clement," she said. "Surely it is well that he should keep up some connection with home. Besides, suppose she should be right after all, mother, and Clement be proved not guilty of this wretched thing!"

"Maud, you insult my dear brother," was the answer. "Don't you see how injudicious it is to let Clement and Margaret be so much together? It is not as though we were all as we used to be. Suppose she were to grow too fond of Clement; what a worry that would be!"

"There is no fear of that, mother."

"I do not know," continued Mrs. Northcott. "Sometimes I feel very uncertain about Henry Grayson. It is a pity that those who would make the best husbands so often make the worst lovers."

"I am quite sure of this, mother," said Maud, with great emphasis, "that Brownie looks upon Clement as her brother just as much as I do."

"Then, Maud, perhaps you will tell me why she judges him so differently?"

"Because she is herself so much nobler and better than I am," said Maud, enthusiastically. "She cannot easily believe evil of anybody. I quite agree with you about Henry. Whatever she may have thought of him twelve months ago, he is nothing to her now."

"Really, Maud, I do wish you would not be so mysterious," complained Mrs. Northcott. "Why," she exclaimed aghast at the idea which had just occurred to her, "you never mean——"

Now Maud's only answer was a blush, which appeared to have no cause or reason whatever.

"Maud, will you answer me? You never mean Mr. Anderson! Well, now,

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this is extremely awkward for me. First, Dr. Stanhope is taken ill; and now there is this about Mr. Anderson. I shall observe Margaret closely. If the young man had means, I don't know that I should so much object. Perhaps he will get this appointment at the Eye Hospital. They say that would lead to something. But one thing I am quite determined about: Margaret shall not hold any more clandestine meetings with your brother."

After parting from Brownie, Clement had strolled moodily along the lane, he cared not whither. He told himself that his ally had deserted him and gone over to the enemy. She had espoused his cause before them all on the day of his father's funeral; now it seemed she had as openly deserted it.

"Good afternoon, Northcott."

It was Captain Oliver who spoke, as he whisked by on his high dog-cart. A huge cigar was between his lips, and, for once, his face did not entirely lack expression. He looked extremely angry. On the back seat, by the groom, Clement espied a portmanteau — sign of Oliver's intention to take the train from Middleton.

Clement had had no thought of going to the Nook; nothing was further from his mind until his regrets and self-reproaches had been interrupted by Captain Oliver's greeting.

The house was about a mile distant; but, by a judicious trespass, the mile might be halved. During the last week or two his intimacy with his fair friend had flourished exceedingly, and upon each occasion of dissatisfaction with Brownie—a dissatisfaction which he all the time knew to be ridiculous — fate seemed to drive him towards Mrs. Oliver.

Clement was soon in Mrs. Oliver's garden. It was a sultry evening; and the low French window which led to the drawing-room stood wide open. Clement hesitated whether to enter by this or the door, until, seeing Mrs. Oliver within the half-darkened room, he chose the window. Her back was turned towards him, her golden head was bowed as though over some fascinating romance.

"Mrs. Oliver!" he called, placing one foot within the room.

Half afraid, she rose abruptly to face him, without any attempt to hide the traces of recent tears.

"I beg your pardon," he apologised, "I am intruding; I ought to have gone to the door."

"Why?" she asked, brushing her hand across her face. "Come at any time, and any way you like. I am always glad to see you."

Her hearty welcome stood out in marked contrast with his recent parting from Brownie. Why, since Brownie's defection, Mrs. Oliver was the only friend who remained to him, and the sight of her tearful face touched his heart, infuriating him against her husband, who doubtless had caused those tears to flow, awakening the deepest sympathy for her who shed them.

If the marks of distress did not actually add to Mrs. Oliver's beauty, they certainly rendered her more dangerously fascinating. Her eyes may have been less brilliant than usual; but her timorous, clinging helplessness made ample amends for any loss of light. Her ordinary assertive demeanour, coupled with her little affectations of importance, had led Clement to look upon her entirely as his superior; and to see her now, standing weak and sorrowful before him, her sad eyes asking very plainly for pity, was a new, as well as a not altogether unpleasant experience.

"You are in trouble," he said, retaining her hand in his; "is there nothing I can do to help you?"

"Nothing in the world—neither you nor anybody, unless you could take me away from this hateful place. Oh, he is driving me to despair!" she cried. "There, you cannot imagine what my life is like! Let us put it aside now. I am my own mistress for a couple of days, at any rate. Will you stay to dinner?"

"I only looked in for a minute or two," he said; but his voice betrayed his hesitation.

"Why can't you stay? Surely you are not afraid of Mrs. Grundy. As for me, I care for nothing. Why should I? Who cares for me? Middleton is too good for me. Would you believe it?—I have not exchanged a word with a woman, except the servants and the tradespeople, during the whole time I have lived here."

Each of these two was dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs; each was, in a certain sense, an outcast from society. She was a beautiful woman, and in trouble; he, like most strong men, was easily led away by pity for the weak. Mrs. Oliver could read Clement's thoughts in his face, which was, indeed, extremely close to her own. For the moment he was under a spell — fascinated. He had ceased to be master of himself; his ordinary world, with which he had been so dissatisfied, was completely forgotten.

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Mrs. Oliver was so close to him that her shoulder touched his breast, and, loving to feel her power over him, she dallied there. Brownie, like the rest of her world, had been cold to Mrs. Oliver; now was the time for retaliation. She believed that she had only to draw a little nearer, to utter one or two words, to render his state of intoxication hopeless. As for Clement, he did not think at all.

The intention forms itself, the sentence is arranged, the words tremble on the lips; yet they remain unspoken! Mrs. Oliver's lips parted; she glanced quickly at Clement, then suddenly broke into a low, rippling laugh.

"And how is the charming cousin, Clement?" she asked, quietly.

The spell was broken; a second ago he had been Clement drunk, he was now Clement sober. He was a strong man, but he could have cried like a child. He realised that he had received a great mercy, far greater than his deserts.

"Poor boy!" she said, shrugging her shoulders, mockingly; she remembered her husband's words concerning Clement. She was fond of him, too, in a manner.

Nothing could induce him to remain another five minutes in her presence. Slowly and thoughtfully he walked home under the red glories of the summer sunset, more sincerely thankful than ever in his life before.

SOMNAMBULISM.

The extent to which the cerebral organs are awake during sleep has been the subject of much discussion. In perfect sleep, the theory is that all the organs are in a state of quiescence; but how is it in the case of dream, and still more in the case of somnambulism, which includes not only walking, but talking, thinking, and doing, while in a state of sleep?

Dr. Macnish's theory of somnambulism is that it is dreaming of so forcible a nature as to stimulate into action the muscular system and one or more of the organs of the senses. Thus, to dream vividly, and with excited energy of walking, arouses the muscles of locomotion, so that the person naturally gets up and walks. To dream that we hear or see, may produce so vivid a cerebral impression as to stimulate the eyes and ears, or the organs of the brain with which they are connected, until we do see objects and hear sounds just as if we were awake. If the muscles only are excited, then we simply walk. If the organs of sight and hearing are also excited, then we walk, and see, and hear, and probably talk as well. The senses of smell, taste, and touch may further be stimulated into activity during sleep; and a condition of mind is the result which is so like perfect wakefulness as to be in reality a second consciousness, or a double life.

Sleep-walking is often hereditary, but is more common among women and children than among men. And sleep-walkers do not always see, although they usually have their eyes open. Most of us have probably met with cases of this simple kind, in which only the muscles of locomotion are in play while all the senses are dormant, and a very large number of persons have experienced the thing themselves.

Very different in degree, however, is the somnambulism in such cases as that of the English clergyman who used to rise in his sleep, light a candle, write a sermon, correct it with interlineations, and then go to bed again, awaking in the morning without any recollection of his midnight performance. Or like that of the miller, noticed by Dr. Gall, who was in the habit of rising every night and going through his usual work at the mill without any remembrance of it in the morning. Or like the farmer, mentioned by Dr. Pritchard, who rose, dressed himself, saddled his horse, and rode to market in a state of somnolence. Or like Mr. Blacklock, who on one occasion, after retiring early from the family-circle, arose and returned to the room, joined in the conversation, sang a song, and went to bed again, not only without any after-recollection, but also without any of the company having suspected that he was asleep all the time. Or like the boy who dreamed that he got out of bed, scaled an enormous precipice, captured an eagle's nest, and placed it under the bed, all of which he found in the morning that he had actually done, and had been seen to do—the precipice being one he would not have dared to climb in his waking moments.

Sleep-walking may be caused by several things: such as a heavy meal, a bad digestion, a nervous, overwrought temperament, or general irritability of the system. But there are many cases in which it is impossible to ascribe a cause; and there is also a somnambulism which is produced by artificial means, which we may call either mesmerism or magnetism.

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The German scientific theory is, that from the standpoint of every psychical being, Nature is divided into two halves—the one acting upon consciousness, the other not; that sleep is accompanied by an inner waking; that it is not a mere negation of waking, but contains also "positive sides." Thus, it is argued, the processes which come to the inner consciousness in sleep, take place also in waking, but only remain unconscious. Sleep does not produce new influences on the organism and new reactions, but simply raises those which were subordinate during waking. It introduces new influences and modes of reaction to consciousness, and the result is a dream.

Dr. du Prel, who has devoted much attention to this subject, and who deals with it at some length in his "Die Philosophie der Mystik," says that somnambulism induces susceptibility to finer influences than are received by the senses of the waking person; and that, as the senses in waking evoke faculties the more remarkable the more finely they are organised, so must the sense educed in somnambulism, receiving influences too fine for the day-senses, release faculties superior to those of the waking man.

So much evidence has been gathered of the remarkable character of somnambulic faculties, that many physicians have enthusiastically declared somnambulism to be a higher condition than that of waking life. Others, however, are just as confident in regarding it as a falling-back into the instinct life of animals.

Dr. du Prel maintains that the truth lies midway between these extremes. Somnambulism is the influence of Nature and man in presence of a passive state, and, therefore, it is not a state of equal dignity with waking. But, on the other hand, faculties are often revealed in somnambulism, which, even if only transitory, are so superior to those of ordinary man as to disprove the mere instinct theory.

Somnambulism has been called exalted sleep; and the philosophy of sleep has been by no means exhausted, even by Dr. Macnish. We all know by experience the recuperative quality of sleep, and we have, most of us, observed how a prolonged sleep is often the turning-point in a case of critical illness. But what can we make of the apparently well authenticated instances of phenomenal sleeps which are recorded in many scientific works? Schubert, for instance, tells of a boy who slept for sixteen weeks, and, when he awoke, both the disease from which he suffered and the desire for more sleep had departed. He also quotes a case of a sleep of four years, interrupted with but short waking intervals. Another German doctor records the case of an old priest at Stettin, who, one Christmas Day, felt need of a little rest after the first mass, and dropped asleep in his cell for thirteen weeks. In Mayo's "Truths in Popular Superstitions" there is mention of a girl known to the author who, at twelve years old, fell into a sleep which lasted thirteen years, during which she grew from a child to a mature woman.

We offer no opinion upon these phenomena; we only quote them on the authority of scientists by way of illustrating what a very remarkable thing sleep is, and how much we have yet to learn about its mental and physical attributes.

Somnambulism has been often called a disease, but Du Prel maintains that it is not so. It rather heals the diseased—either, directly, through its deep sleep, or, indirectly, from the fact that, while in sleep, somnambulists are often capable of self-prescription. Mesmer's theory was that such severe diseases of the nervous system as catalepsy, epilepsy, and so on, are really "an incomplete somnambulism," which can be cured by the application of artificially-induced somnambulism—that is, by mesmerism.

This brings us to the consideration of artificial somnambulism, which may be said to take place when one person is subjected by another to the influence of animal magnetism. Now, the peculiarity of the magnetic sleep is, that while much deeper than the natural sleep, the "inner waking" is also more complete and more clear. This magnetic sleep was well known to the old Hindu adepts, and it took an important place in the philosophy of the Vedas. It is even believed that the Indian mystics could produce magnetic sleep, or artificial somnambulism, in their own persons; and there is little doubt that the object of the Jogis is to attain this power of self-mesmerism.

When we endeavour to recall a dream, we can usually only reproduce a confused mental picture, composed of disjointed materials taken, without apparent connection, out of our waking life; and yet if a dreamer were asked while dreaming if he slept, he would assuredly answer no, for the dream is with him an actual exercise of consciousness. And so with the

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"inner waking" of somnambulists—it is reality to their intelligences. In ordinary sleep, those who have been born blind have dream-images; and it is said that in somnambulism the born-blind actually see. One can only explain these things by accepting the theory of the dualism of consciousness.

The connection between natural sleep and magnetic, or mesmeric, sleep, is so close, that the former has been called "incipient somnambulism." It has been proved by repeated experiments that natural sleep is the most favourable moment for magnetising any one. As a rule, sleeping persons can be magnetised with more ease and success than if they were awake; but it is not necessary to believe all the extravagant miracles which are claimed as the result of the exercise of animal magnetism.

A good many of the phenomena of somnambulism are explainable by memory. There is an authenticated case of a distinguished musician who once dreamed he was listening to a remarkable piece of music performed by some singers. He remembered the melody on awaking, and was so delighted with it that he at once wrote it down. Several years afterwards, as he was turning over some old sheets of music that he had never seen before—as he thought—he came upon the very melody he had dreamed. He could not remember that he had ever seen or heard this melody except in his dream, and yet it is beyond doubt that he had heard it; that he had forgotten it; and that it had been reproduced in his dream in the manner recorded.

Coleridge tells of a maidservant who, in the delirium of fever, repeated long passages in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—languages which she neither understood nor could pronounce when in health, but which she had heard a former master often reading aloud. An even more remarkable case is mentioned by Dr. Mayo. This was of a girl who, knowing absolutely nothing of astronomy and mathematics, once in a somnambulic state wrote down the pages of an astronomical treatise, with calculations and delineations. It was found that this was taken from the "Encyclopædia Britannica," which she said she had read in the library. But when awake she could not recall a word of it.

These are but some of many illustrations which might be given of cases where, what appeared at first to be remarkable original productions were only reproductions of memory long dormant. They show that sleep and delirium often reverse the former process of forgetting, and that, as Du Prel says, we possess a latent memory, the content of which partially returns in dreams; sometimes with, but often without recollection.

The exaltation of memory, which takes place in sleep, explains many remarkable dreams and somnambulistic notions, to which superstitious or mystic significance is supposed to attach.

Du Prel mentions the case of a girl, employed as a neatherd, who occupied a room divided only by a thin partition from that of a violin player, who used to play often during half the night. This girl, after some months, got another place, and after she had been there for some two years, sounds began to be heard coming from her room exactly like those of a violin. This went on for hours, and, with irregular intervals, lasted for two years. Then the girl began to reproduce the tones of a piano which was played in the family, and afterwards began to discourse in her sleep, in a learned and sarcastic manner, on religious and political subjects. In every case she was reproducing in sleep what she had heard said or played by members of the family or visitors.

There is another case mentioned by another writer—De Boismont. A widow was sued for a debt of her deceased husband, which she knew was paid. But she could not find the receipt. Greatly disturbed, she went to bed and dreamed that her husband came to her and said that the receipt was in a red velvet bag in a hidden drawer of his desk. This she found on waking to be the case. Of course, she had known of the hiding-place before, but had forgotten.

We shall now give a number of curious instances of the action and reaction of memory in somnambulism, culled from a number of German and other scientific writers, and cited by Du Prel.

A basket-maker, named Mohk, observed by Varnhagen, once heard a sermon which greatly impressed him. The following night he got up and walked in his sleep, repeating word for word the discourse he had heard. He continued to do this at intervals for forty years, although on waking he knew nothing of what he had done.

A celebrated female somnambulist named Selma is known to have repeated when asleep a poem which she had heard

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a year before; and once she recited a poem by her brother which he himself no longer knew, having lost it for thirteen years.

The French scientist, Ricard, knew a young male somnambulist who, when in the magnetic sleep, could recite almost word for word a book he had read the day before, or a sermon which he had heard. Another French subject could give, when asleep, the names, composition, and quantities of the numerous medicines which had been prescribed for her by different physicians during her illness, yet when awake she knew nothing about them.

Dr. Wienholt had a patient with a very bad memory in waking, but who, during somnambulism, could recite long passages from a book she had been reading.

Dr. Schindler had a patient who, in the magnetic sleep, could give the whole history of her disease, many incidents of which the physician had himself forgotten.

The French Dr. Puységur testifies to a patient he had who, when four years old, had suffered injury to the head with a consequent surgical operation, which so destroyed the memory that he could not recollect a thing which happened an hour before. Yet in somnambulism this patient recollected everything exactly, could describe the operation which he had undergone, and predicted that he should never recover his waking memory, as, indeed, proved to be the case.

Lafontaine, a once famous mesmeriser, has recorded an experiment which he says he once made himself at Rennes. A young actress there had asked him to put her to sleep, but requested to be wakened in good time for rehearsal, as she had only read once a part which she was to perform that night. Instead of waking her, however, Lafontaine induced her to go on the stage in her somnambulic condition and to go through her part without mistake. Yet when wakened immediately afterwards she could neither remember it, nor that she had just repeated it.

The somnambulic consciousness is linked with earlier magnetic conditions; that is to say, somnambulists can recall what occurred in previous sleeps, but not in waking intervals. This is one of the most curious phases of the subject, as it shows that we may have a double memory, one side of which is latent while the other is active, turn and turn about.

Then, as to other sensations, we quote from the testimony of a patient of Dr. Kerner's:

"This morning, in the magnetic sleep, I drank elder-tea. On waking, I felt no taste of it. Waking, I ate meat, and then fell into a magnetic sleep. I then had again the taste of elder-tea, and not of the meat. But, on coming out of this sleep, I had again the taste of the meat."

Another curious case was that of the nephew of Rezzi, the physician. In the somnambulic state he complained of want of appetite and nausea, but, on waking, wanted immediately to eat; the indisposition always returning with the sleep.

Professor Debret mentions that he awakened one somnambulist while she was singing. She ceased her song, and looked about in great perplexity, but when put to sleep again, resumed in the same key and at the same syllable where she had been interrupted.

The physiologist, Burdach, was told one morning that his wife had been seen the night before walking on the roof of the church. He took the opportunity at her next sleep to question her, when she gave a full account of her proceedings, and mentioned having hurt her left foot by a nail on the roof. When awakened, she was asked about the wound in her foot, but could give no explanation. This appears to have been an ordinary case of sleep-walking, not of magnetic sleep; yet we find the same evidence of dual consciousness.

The subject in its scientific aspects is hardly suitable for discussion in these pages. Our object has simply been to present our readers with some remarkable instances, reputedly authentic, of the peculiar operations of the mind and consciousness in sleep. Du Prel's conclusion is:

"Our waking life forms a single whole, as does also the somnambulic life. If dissimilar conditions, as waking and somnambulism, alternate, recollection unites the similar conditions, bridging over the intervening periods of forgetfulness. Thus the thread of recollection runs uninterruptedly through the like conditions; with every return of the same condition, its former ideas are reproduced, even though they have been forgotten in the interval."

After all this, let us think more respectfully of dreams.

A DOOMED SHIP.

A NAUTICAL SKETCH.

Out on the broad blue ocean, not far from the equator, thousands of miles from

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any land, lying motionless on a calm sea, was a dismasted ship. Nothing remained of her taunt masts and spars but the mizen-mast, the bowsprit, and jib and flying jib-booms. From the mizen topsail, and cross-jack yards, hung a few ragged strips of canvas, and out at the far ends of the flying jib-boom depended part of the stay and some fragments of a sail, torn and rent, just as it had been left after the fierce gale which had rendered this gallant ship so helpless a wreck. Not a breath of wind was stirring in the heavens; not a cloud was in the deep-blue sky; not a ripple or a flaw disturbed the far-stretching ocean. It was high noon, and the sun was almost vertical. All was silent. The sun was pouring down its fierce tropical rays on the blistered deck and on the vast, calm sea. There she lay, a spectral ship upon a silent ocean. There was not a sign of life on board, not a sound could be heard, except now and again when a swirl of water made the rudder-chains rattle and creak, as the wheel moved a few spokes backwards and forwards; or, when an albatross flapped up from the sea, hovered over the ship, and then flew away into the distance.

The day passed slowly, as many days had passed; the sun began to sink lower and lower in the western sky, and once more, like a blood-red shield, it sank into the bosom of the ocean, leaving behind it a flood of erubescent light, which tinged the sky with its ensanguined hues, and these, reflected in the water beneath, caused the ship to appear as though she was floating in a sea of blood. The crimson faded into orange and pink, and then into grey, and then the shadows of evening stole slowly over the scene; then one by one the stars came out and studded the whole of the cloudless firmament.

Suddenly there came from the cuddy window a stream of light, and a man, gaunt and emaciated, peered out on to the deserted deck. A few minutes afterwards another gleam of light shot from a small aperture in the door of the forecastle deck-house, and two eyes, cruel, reddish brown eyes, also peered cautiously out. These two men had been for days waiting and watching for each other's death. They were the Captain and mate of the vessel, who, when the crew had taken to the boats, had refused to desert her.

For days and weeks—how many they had no idea, for they had lost all count of time—they had been alone on the pathless deep. At first, they had made the best of their situation: day by day hoping and expecting that succour would come and they should be rescued. They had put themselves on short allowance of both food and water; but, notwithstanding, the food was at length nearly consumed, the water was quite exhausted, so that they had nothing left that was drinkable but a few bottles of wine and brandy. To the torture of hunger was now added the agony of raging thirst—a thirst which neither wine nor brandy would quench, but rather intensify.

Anything more horrible than their situation cannot be imagined, and the dreadful conviction was being forced upon them that they must die.

This was the state of affairs three days previous to the opening of this story. The Captain was sitting with his eyes apparently closed, and the mate was watching him with eager, hungry eyes. Up to this point the mate had been the most hopeful of the two; but now he had abandoned himself to despair.

No succour could reach them he knew while the calm lasted; but this was not the thought that was haunting his mind. "One of them must die—the death of the one would be the preservation of the other." This was the mental refrain which, as it were, formed the chorus to every other thought. "The death of one would be the preservation of the other."

He sat there eyeing the Captain with a diabolical leer. He was no longer a man, he was a demon. Suddenly he started up; by a revulsion of feeling, which is not uncommon in such cases, he had passed from helpless despondency into furious delirium. With a hoarse cry he sprang at Captain Dunnett, brandishing a long knife in his hand. A fierce struggle ensued; it was short and sharp, and the mate, after being disarmed, was pushed forward, and fell violently upon the deck. Captain Dunnett was the younger and stronger of the two, and, had he been so inclined, could have despatched the mate with ease; but he contented himself with disarming him, threw the knife into the sea, retreated to the cabin, and shut and locked the door.

The mate after this grew more furious, and after vainly attempting to enter the cabin, withdrew to the forecastle and took up his abode there; and now for three days he had been waiting and watching for the Captain's death.

To be buried alive has been thought to

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be beyond question the most painful of all deaths; but it is doubtful if the long-drawn agonies which were being endured by these two men were not more painful of the two.

"How long—how long can this last?" moaned Captain Dunnett, as he sat and gazed out into the night. A painful sort of apathy was stealing over him. He had no hope, he made no effort, he had no longer any wish to live. If death were coming, his only prayer was that it might come quickly.

Slowly, minute by minute, the life was ebbing out of him; and as surely, with a tortoise-like gradation, the night crept on. The moon had risen, and now, in full-orbed splendour, was riding high in the heavens, casting a long wake of silvery light on the placid sea which danced and flickered right away to the distant horizon.

The two lights still gleamed on to the deserted deck, and the two watchers still watched on.

Meanwhile, nature had not been idle. Away, in the distant horizon, great masses of fleecy clouds began to pile themselves up one above another, gradually extending themselves across the northern heavens. The cloud-packing went on for more than half an hour, accompanied by hot puffs of wind which now and again ruffled the waters. The sky every minute grew blacker, and the clouds more dense; vivid flashes of lightning shot across the sky, and there were mutterings of thunder in the distance.

The silent watcher in the cuddy saw nothing, and heard nothing of all this. His head had sunk heavily on his bosom, and he slept. Suddenly there was a noise beneath the deck like the scratching of a rat; then, slowly and noiselessly, the trap-hatch under the table was lifted, and through the aperture a head, with curly red hair and fierce eyes, appeared. They were those of Jarvise the mate. After pausing to see that all was clear, he placed his hands on the deck, and then, with a supreme effort, he silently lifted himself into a sitting posture, and again he paused to listen. He could hear the regular breathing of his companion as he sat sleeping peacefully, and a grim smile of satisfaction passed across his wild and haggard face. Silently and stealthily he crawled clear of the table, and then stood up erect on his feet. His eyes glared wildly, and his breath came quick and short as he drew a knife from his bosom and poised himself to strike.

All unconscious of his peril, Captain Dunnett slept on. He had no idea of danger from such a quarter; no idea that the mate had for two days past been labouring with maniacal patience and tenacity to clear an opening through the cargo, and had at length succeeded in making his way to the cabin hatch.

Jarvise stood over his intended victim, his eyes glittering with diabolic light; the blow was in the act of descending, when his arm was arrested. The cabin was suddenly illuminated with a blue, electric light, and a peal of thunder, loud as the crack of doom, broke over the ship. The maniac stood with his arm raised, as though it had suddenly been paralysed.

The crash of the thunder awoke Captain Dunnett from his slumbers, and he sprang to his feet. He took in the situation at a glance; and, flinging himself on his would-be murderer, sought to disarm him. The struggle was for dear life, and the mate fought savagely. But at last the Captain's superior skill and strength prevailed, and Jarvise was once more at his mercy.

"Strike, man—strike!" shrieked the mate. "It is your life or mine!"

"You are mad, Jarvise!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Yes, I am; but strike, man—strike! Put an end to this torture; I can stand no more of it."

"No!" cried the Captain, throwing him from him.

Then he turned, and left the cabin, locking the door behind him.

Out on the deck a grand and startling sight met his view. The whole of the northern part of the heavens was enveloped in the blackest darkness, while the southern half was clear and bright. The next instant the northern half was ablaze with the most vivid light. But it was not this that caused such excitement in the breast of Captain Dunnett. The central object in this scene was a large brig, not more than a mile and a half distant, bearing down to their succour, under a press of canvas.

For a second or two he stood rooted to the spot. Then, in a wild transport of joy, he threw up his arms, and cried:

"Saved! Saved! Thank Heaven! Thank Heaven!"

All thoughts of Jarvise's diabolical attempts on his life vanished, and in an instant he had unlocked the cuddy door,

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and, seizing the mate by the arm, dragged him, half-stunned and dazed by his fall, out on to the main deck, and, as another flash of lightning disclosed the brig again to their view, cried:

"There! there! See what a merciful Heaven has sent us!"

A second or two afterwards, a vivid flash of lightning moved over the mizen-mast; it ran down the mast, which tottered, and, with a crash, fell over the side. With the first crash of thunder that followed, Jarvise rushed toward the side, and was in the act of springing into the sea, when Captain Dunnett seized him by the collar, and flung him violently back on the deck, where he lay, stunned and bleeding.

The lightning flashed almost incessantly. The wind came in hot puffs. The brig still held on her course. By this time she was within half a mile of them. But suddenly the hot puffs ceased, and she lay motionless on the water.

All this while Captain Dunnett and the mate, who had soon recovered his consciousness, stood watching her in an agony of suspense.

The gloom was rapidly deepening; the clouds were hurrying on; the moon and the stars had all disappeared, and the sky was one vast pall of inky blackness. Broad sheets of lightning now and again shot up from the bosom of the ocean, illuminating the whole mass of sea and clouds with a blue, spectral light, which made the portentous aspect of the heavens more visible, while the silence, when unbroken by the thunder, was solemn and oppressive.

But what is that curling up from the open hatch in the cabin? It is smoke! At first it came in small wreaths; but now it is pouring out in a great volume.

The ship is on fire!

The lightning, which had shivered the mizen-mast, had descended into the hold and set fire to the cargo, and the conflagration was spreading rapidly.

The two men, when they made this discovery, stood appalled with horror. They knew they were standing, as it were, on a volcano, for, in the magazine below, was stored a quantity of gunpowder, which might explode at any moment and blow the ship to atoms.

The smoke belched forth in large volumes, and now and again a bright, flickering flame shot up from the hatchway.

In another few minutes the flames were pouring into the cuddy, and the whole structure was on fire. The flame extended, and in less than ten minutes the whole of the after part of the ship was on fire, the lurid glare lighting up the superincumbent clouds and leaden sea, and producing a scene of surpassing grandeur.

And now another danger was threatening them. Away in the distance there was a dull, sobbing moan, which each minute became more distinct—the tornado was fast approaching.

The last time they had looked at the brig she was lying becalmed; and they had imagined that at the rate the conflagration was extending, there was little chance of succour arriving in time to save them, for now the deck was getting hot under their feet, and the fire had extended to the forecastle deck-house; but at that moment they were startled by a sharp cry of "Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!" and, looking in the direction from whence the sound came, they saw a boat, manned with four oars, pulling rapidly towards them. In another minute the welcome sound of "In bow!" was heard, and the boat was alongside.

No time was to be lost; the storm was brewing in the north, and, if it burst upon them before they reached the ship, their doom was certain. Again, the powder in the hold might explode at any minute, so they hurriedly lowered themselves into the boat and pushed off.

While the second mate was rescuing the two men from the burning ship, the Captain and mate of the brig were making all preparations for the coming gale; and, before the boat had got alongside, the sails had been furled and everything made snug.

Captain Dunnett and his mate had been kept up by the excitement of the situation, but the moment they were on board the brig they fainted dead off, and were taken below in a state of unconsciousness. This had scarcely been accomplished, and the quarter-boat hoisted up and made fast, when the tornado burst upon them with terrific fierceness. For a few minutes they could neither see nor hear anything but the roaring of the tormented waters and the howling and thundering of the wind. At first the brig reeled and bent before it; then she rose up, and, like a furious steed, dashed on frantically in the wake of the burning wreck.

It was a scene of grandeur and horror, which it would be difficult to equal, and

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excited awe in every heart. The force of the wind was tremendous, and the two vessels drove on madly before it. The wreck was now one mass of flames, the red glare of which lit up the foaming sea and the sky above, showing the outlines of the brig, and the faces of her crew, with terrible distinctness. The two vessels were running in parallel lines, and were not more than half a mile apart. Suddenly a towering mass of smoke and flame shot up into the sky. This was followed by a terrific report, and then all was black darkness. The powder in the magazine had exploded, and that was the last that was ever seen of that poor doomed ship.

All that night the gale continued, and shortly after daylight it moderated, and by noon it had blown itself out, the clouds rose, and the weather cleared up.

Captain Dunnett and the mate were attended with all the kindness and attention which was necessary for men in their exhausted condition. Jarvise was delirious; and many weary days and restless nights passed before he showed any signs of recovery. But he pulled through at last. The Captain was also for a time entirely prostrate; but he, too, gradually regained his strength, and in a fortnight was on deck again.

Poor Jarvise was greatly embarrassed when he first met his old commander. He was naturally of a humane disposition; and now that the frantic passion which was begotten of despair had passed away, he was heartily ashamed of his conduct.

"I was not myself, Captain Dunnett," he said, apologetically. "I was mad with hunger and despair. The devil seemed to have got into my heart; and when I reflect on the thoughts that passed through my mind, and the things I planned during that time, my mind is filled with horror, and I blush with shame when I think of them."

"I am sure you do, Mr. Jarvise," replied the Captain, soothingly; "let us forget all about it."

"Forget it, Captain Dunnett!" cried the mate, plaintively; "I shall never forget it! The misery and torment of that dreadful time will haunt me to my dying day."

"A dreadful time, truly," replied the Captain, solemnly; "and I can only pray Heaven that no other two men may ever be called on to pass through such a dreadful ordeal as we did."

"Amen!" cried the mate.

SUMMER.

SUMMER's the time for dreams;
For fancies set to music by the streams;
For loves that wake, and reign, and die 'neath fairy moonlit gleams.

Summer's the time for youth,
When every fleeting ray shows real and sooth,
When vow and aim seem to fresh life the very core of truth.

Summer's the time for flowers,
While the thrush trills his song in rose-twined bowers,
And June rules, fair despotic Queen, through all her golden hours.

Summer's the time for hope.
To her soft touch the Eden portals ope,
And at her call life's arms are spread for Heaven's widest scope.

But Summer days pass by,
The grey shade creeps across the azure sky,
The swallow sees the warning sign, and preens her wings to fly.

September, with her face
All calm and still in soft pathetic grace,
Comes with her noiseless step to take fast-fading Summer's place.

"Listen," sighs dying June,
"Since I must leave the world I love so soon,
My strength and warmth for Autumn chill, take as my parting boon."

ROUND ABOUT PARIS.

SAINT CLOUD AND VERSAILLES.

THERE is still a faint memory of the Ancient Monarchy in Paris, and nowhere is it felt more strongly than at the Pont Royal, close by the ruined courts of the Tuileries, and looking down upon the quay, whence the little steamers start that make the voyage down the river. There is a fine archaic appearance, too, about those same Bateaux Parisiens, that even excel in antiquity our Citizen B, or Bridegroom, or Wedding Ring, such as still navigate the troubled waters between Chelsea and London Bridge. For these Parisian boats, if they failed to make the acquaintance of the elder Bourbons, must have been familiar enough with the "Monarchy of July," as people used to call the dynasty of Louis Philippe. Indeed, except for their steaminess, they might well represent the "galiote réglée" that started daily from this same Pont Royal in the time of Louis le Grand, and for the same destination, making its way sometimes with a flowing sail, or dragged along by heavy oars, or throwing a rope ashore and being tugged off at a good pace by a pair of stout horses. There is no essential change, after all, in the ap-

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pearance of the craft; there is the same row of cabin windows, the same raised deck, the elevated platform from which the steersman manipulates the huge tiller. The company on board is a little different perhaps. In the old galiot we might have met Molière and two or three of the fair dames of his company; a sprinkling of Abbés, with a few Benedictines or Dominicans in their robes of black and grey; a musqueteer or two of the King's guards, or belonging to the regiment of Monsieur. These last, no doubt, on their way to Versailles; for, although Versailles cannot be reached by water, any more than Bohemia, yet the river takes us a good half of the way.

And for Versailles we should have found on the roadway above a goodly contingent of gilded coaches setting forth, with their four or six long-tailed Flemish horses, coachmen and lacqueys in rich liveries, and within Marquises and Grand Seigneurs impatient to pay their respects to the great source of honour and profit—the "Roi Soleil."

The way is still plain enough—the great road that was made for Louis le Grand; he might have been great, but was he very wise to abandon Paris, in order to live at Versailles? And though the road was made for him, he never used it, or, at all events, but once, when he made his one solitary visit to Paris—only one during the long years of his stately sojourn at Versailles, and that to return thanks at Notre Dame for recovery from an illness. Yet the way has a Royal touch about it still; a pleasant way, if one chooses to make the progress along the quays and by the Cours de la Reine, and so by Passy, where people used to go to drink the waters, when our Londoners resorted to Clerkenwell or Islington, and then joining the grande route to Versailles. A constant stream of vehicles and foot-passengers flowed, night and day, both to and from Versailles — coaches of State, hundreds of chariots and post-waggons—a host of all kinds of vehicles. At the barriers were a crowd of carriages waiting to be hired. If you were a gentleman, or, at all events, the wearer of a laced coat, you jumped into the first four-horsed carriage you saw; three other chance passengers of the same condition would soon join you, and away would drive your Jehu, with loud shouts and cracking his whip to warn humble passengers to clear out of your worship's way. This would cost you but a crown, and you would leave far behind you the humbler bourgeois crowded eighteen or twenty into the stage-waggon, dragged by a pair of foundered horses. You would cross the river by the bridge of Sèvres, and there had been a great hill beyond — the Butte de Chaville; but this had been levelled by the engineers of the great King, and then begins the gallop for the avenue, the great avenue of Versailles that leads to the palace gates, the town itself "making a hedge" respectfully on either side.

The road to Versailles is still gay and pleasant enough, though no longer crowded with vehicles; but arid and dusty in the heat of summer, when four-horse coaches or breaks, loaded with excursionists — American or English—may be seen along the way. But our route to-day is by the river, and we join the crowd upon the little steam-boat pier, and are presently floating past the quays of Paris, past the palaces of the Exhibition and the great Eiffel Tower, and, touching at Passy and Auteuil, we pass between the green banks of the fortifications and away down the swift, shining river, with pleasant banks, and poplars, and meadows here and there, and cabarets and cafés, with their green balconies and verandahs for those who linger by the way and trifle with consommations and cigarettes and the pleasures of al fresco banquets. At Billancourt, a herd of goats is browsing on the green banks, tended by an ancient with venerable beard; and so, among villas and market-gardens, with here and there a factory of less rural surroundings—but, still, more pleasant than factories usually are with us—we pass by green islets and gently swelling hills, till Bas-Meudon is sonorously chanted by the conductor of the boat.

A passenger by the same route, a hundred and fifty years ago, describes the hills as covered with vineyards—shrubby verdure attached, as it seems, to so many broom-handles; but the vineyards have disappeared, though grapes are still grown for the table among the market-gardens and rose-gardens that here abound. But it seems that, from the time of Charlemagne down to the end of the last century, the Seine was bordered almost as thickly by vineyards as the Rhine. The great abbeys had their vineyards along these sunny slopes, and detachments of the monks occupied themselves with the vintage and with the storage and carriage of

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the wine that resulted from their labours. There was a time when these wines of the country were relished even in Paris, and one might call for a bottle of Bas-Meudon or of Vin de Surèsnes with as much aplomb as for one of Medoc or Pomard. But the fashion of such things has long since passed away.

The charm of the Seine, hereabouts, is its indolent, graceful way of loitering in its course, careless of its reaching its destination. And, hereabouts, the river takes a graceful sweep, where Sèvres lies pleasantly under the hill, with its porcelain factory that has a kind of Royal and Imperial flavour about it. So that, after bringing us away from Paris, as swiftly and directly as it can, the river seems more inclined to carry us back again. For here is Boulogne, and, beyond, the bosky thickets of the Bois de Boulogne feather down to the water's edge with green glades shining among the trees. But, resisting the attractions of that side of the river, we will land instead at Saint Cloud, where houses and cafés line the quay, while, beyond, rise the wooded park and the once wide-famed château.

When all this country about was forest wild, a grandson of Clovis, offered his choice between sword and scissors—the sword for his throat or the scissors to crop the long hair of the Prince and convert him into a monk all shaven and shorn — accepted the latter alternative, and retired from the world to found a monastery in this pleasant place. The place was then Nogent-sur-Seine, and had been Novigentum when Gaul was a Roman province. When the princely abbot died in the odour of sanctity, the place took his name, which, by the way, was Clodowold, which the Gaul, with his practical sagacity, has shortened to Cloud.

The relics of the saint brought pilgrims and offerings to the shrine; but the reputation of its wealth brought the Normans down upon it—on the other side of the Channel we should have called them the Danes—who acted after their usual heathen fashion, although they missed the bones of the saint—not, perhaps, of much value to them—which were carried off to Paris. When the Normans were gone the monks came back; but whether they brought their relics with them is not so certain. Anyhow, the convent and its adjoining buildings became a favourite residence of the Princes of the House of Capet.

The little town was then fortified, and was taken, pillaged, and burnt by our English ancestors, in the wars of our Edward the Third; setting a barbarous example to the warriors of a later day, which they only too faithfully followed.

The Princes of the House of Valois were especially fond of Saint Cloud. Henry the Second built a villa there, and erected a bridge of stone. His son, the third Henry, also lived at Saint Cloud, when he was besieging the Leaguers in Paris; and here he was reached and slain by the dagger of Jacques Clement.

The jolly Bourbon, who succeeded him, also lived at Saint Cloud. But the actual seigneurie of the place was in private hands till Louis the Fourteenth bought the château for his brother the Duke of Orleans. And here reigned the fair Duchess as Châtelaine—Henrietta, the daughter of our Charles the First—reigned over pleasures, and fêtes, and gallantries, till one fatal night, when the cry was suddenly raised, "Madame se meurt!" and the terrified household crowded to witness the agonies of their mistress; when, soon after, the wail was heard, "Madame est mort!"

Nobody ventured to ask who did it; but, when Monsieur remarried next year, and to the Princess-Palatine, it was said that the ghost of the late Duchess was seen to haunt a fountain in the park. Anyhow, people evidently expected her ghost to appear, as of one who had not had fair play upon the stage of life.

From this time the château of Saint Cloud remained in the Orleans family, and was noted for its cascade and fountains and the occasional fêtes which were given there, and which rivalled, and in later days even exceeded, the brilliance of those at Versailles.

But a later Duke sold the place to the new Queen, Marie Antoinette, who would have a place of her own where she could live after her own fashion of elegant simplicity. And so the gold cornices were taken down, and the sprawling goddesses abolished; and the Queen had her rooms hung with the pretty printed cottons of Jouy.

Then came the revolution, and Saint Cloud became National property. And at the orangery of St. Cloud met the Council of five hundred, which Napoleon so rudely dissolved at the point of the bayonet; and then to the victor came the spoils, and Saint Cloud fell to the share of the First Consul.

As much domesticity as Napoleon ever

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knew as Emperor was enjoyed by him at Saint Cloud. The showy grandeur of the Empire succeeded the simplicity of Marie Antoinette. And then with the downfall of the Emperor came the invading armies upon the scene. Blucher and Wellington supped together at Saint Cloud, and the allied Sovereigns were fêted by Prince Schwartzenberg, the man in possession. The restored Monarchy kept its state in turn at Saint Cloud, and the Second Empire brought gaiety and glitter once more to the old Palace. And then came the terrible war of 1870. The château was within range of the guns of Saint Valérien, and the French, fearing that the enemy would make use of it as a "point d'appui," bombarded the place with shells. Crash went the fiery missiles through roof and flooring, the grand gallery of Apollo, with its mirrors and painted ceiling, was blown into fragments. Fire completed the work of destruction, and only the bare walls were left of the once proud mansion. And then the Prussians in their turn dealt destruction upon the town. Pleasant Saint Cloud was given to the flames; hardly a roof was left standing. And now there is little to link the town with the past, except the memory of what it has suffered.

But the grounds of Saint Cloud are still pleasant, although the secular trees have perished, and bare ruins attest the horrors of modern warfare. The view is still there of river and plain, with Paris in the distance, its towers and cupolas shining forth from the haze.

And now if we are for Versailles, the station is close at hand—the station of the line that serves the north side of the river, and that winds so pleasantly round about, almost rivalling the Seine in its vagueness. And it is noticeable in this country how, if the roads are straight, and dull, and dusty, the railways wind about here and there, and often show better points of view than can be obtained elsewhere. Anyhow, that is the case with the Versailles Railway, that starts as if it were bound for Dieppe, and then you come round with such a flourish by Puteaux and Suresnes, and under frowning Fort Saint Valérien, which, from its bare scarped heights, looks far more imposing than any of the other forts that surround Paris. With its white buildings shining out against the sky, it gives the impression at a distance of some grand feudal fortress; and it is hard to believe that till modern engineers took the place in hand, the hill was crowned by nothing more formidable than a convent and Calvary, which had been a favourite place for pilgrimages once upon a time.

By whatever route we may reach Versailles we shall be struck by the wide avenues that lead up to the monster palace, and the somewhat faded dignity of the place that is so much an adjunct of the great château, that its streets take form and name from their position in relation to the Royal abode. And Versailles is happily free from all damage of war. Although, perhaps, if two-thirds of it had been knocked to pieces, say the wings shot off, leaving the centre untouched, the result would not have been an unhappy one.

For there is a little too much Versailles. Its galleries run on without end; acres of canvas stretch along the walls covered with battle-pieces. People traverse these galleries as if driven by some irresistible fate, longing all the while to be happily finished with them. And yet Versailles must be seen. The place in its enormity impresses the imagination, and in its garish sterile magnificence it reveals the secret of that ancient monarchy outwardly so grand and secure, inwardly so honeycombed and decayed.

"Versailles," so runs the legend on a print of the period representing the château in all its glory, "the seat and delight of our incomparable monarch, Louis the Great, was formerly but a simple château built by Louis the Thirteenth. The place having had the happiness to please the King, His Majesty began in 1661 to enlarge the buildings, so as to make them suitable for the splendour of his Court." The ancient château still remains encased in the more magnificent buildings around it. The great King had a superstition about the matter. He shared the Gallic superstition that it is unlucky to destroy the roof that a father has raised, to render desolate the paternal hearth. He was not without superstitions, this magnificent monarch. He abandoned Saint Germains, it is said, because from that charming site, which nature seemed to have designed for the seat of Kings, afar off could be discerned the spire of Saint Denis, where one day the monarch would find a place in the Royal vaults.

The site of the palace was once occupied by a humble windmill that ground the corn of the tenants of the manor. Louis the Thirteenth took the place of the honest miller, and on the mill hill he built his red-

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brick villa, that was not even a château to begin with, for the titular château of the manor stood in what is now the great park of Versailles, and the King acquired the seigneurie some years after he had built his house, and then he destroyed the old château, and became, at last, the goodman of Versailles.

The site somehow pleased the young King, his successor, perhaps, because it could have pleased nobody else. It pleased his sense of power to create a paradise out of a bare, scrubby plain, and buildings were presently commenced on a magnificent scale, the younger Mansart being employed as architect for the palace, while Le Notre was commissioned to lay out the park and grounds. The King must have the most splendid waterfalls and cascades to bring freshness and verdure to the barren plain.

The difficulty was to find the water. The first scheme was to impound the river Loire at a distance of one hundred and twenty miles from Versailles, and bring its waters all the way by a grand canal. But the enormous cost and the engineering difficulties of the plan appalled even the King, who did not stick at a few millions to gratify a whim. But this was an affair of milliards.

Then the Seine was resorted to, and a huge machine constructed—the wonder of the age—great pumps worked by a water-wheel, that laboriously and noisily scooped up the water from the river, and set it flowing along conduits and aqueducts towards Versailles. But the water thus raised proved hardly more than sufficient for the use of the new château of Marly, and cascades and fountains soon ran dry.

"Turn on the Eure," was the next suggestion eagerly grasped by the King. Great works were commenced; a splendid aqueduct built near Maintenon, the ruins of which still command admiration. The corvée was employed, workmen were impressed; but still they were not sufficient. "Bring up a corps d'armée," was the order of the King. And, forthwith, forty thousand soldiers were marched to the spot, and toiled and suffered there, like the Israelites under Pharoah, for nine long years, suffering more than the hardships of a campaign, and decimated by disease and pestilence; and all for the King's childish show at Versailles.

With it all, the works were a failure; the levels were wrongly taken, and water would not flow uphill, even to please Louis le Grand, and the war of 1688 was welcomed, as giving a sufficient excuse for withdrawing the troops from their hopeless task without the ignominy of a confessed failure. After all these grand enterprises, it was found that the only practicable means of supplying the fountains of Versailles—and that only scantily and intermittently—was by impounding the streams in the limit of the plateau on which Versailles is placed. Ponds and reservoirs were everywhere made, and a great system of pipes and conduits constructed, which still exists, as the main source of supply, although the Seine still contributes a share, which is raised by the modern machinery which has superseded the old pumps at Marly. But while the smaller fountains can be kept at work for a few hours, about every other Sunday in the summer, the grandes eaux can only be set going once a month; and for all the rest of the year dolphins and sea-monsters gasp in drought and discontent, and Triton blows his wreathed horn in vain.

Some notion of the delights of Versailles when the King was young, and the beautiful La Vallière reigned over his fickle affections, may be gathered from a series of prints which represent the fêtes and diversions of the King, and for three days, beginning on the seventh of May, 1664—the seasons must have changed a little, for an open air fête at that date could hardly be arranged for now without risk of a snowstorm or chilly downpour of rain. But here are the King and all his young courtiers, and a crowd of attendants, mounted on horseback, in the gayest of costumes, caracoling among groves and canals in the full brightness of the sunshine. The King and his Court represent Roger and his knights, as they appeared in the enchanted Isle of Alcine. There is tilting at a ring, with all kinds of martial exercises, which the ladies of the Court delightedly behold, bareheaded, in the open air. At night, there are illuminations and fireworks, with thousands of lamps shining among the trees and reflected in the waters. The four seasons appear in a gilded car, and a long procession of bearers of gifts and tributes from the four quarters of the globe—tributes which conveniently take the form of a magnificent collation that is spread upon tables already prepared, where all the gay company take their seats, while musicians play, and jesters and mountebanks disport, and elephants and camels appear upon the scene, while the whole is lighted by hundreds of

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torches borne aloft by attendants, and by thousands of lamps festooned among the trees.

The next evening's diversion is at the theatre, set out upon the grounds in front of the palace, and open at the back, disclosing the palace and its formal terraces and long avenues. Molière has written a piece expressly for the occasion—"The Princess d'Elide"—perhaps the worst he ever wrote, with interludes of music and masking, in which the King himself appears, to rescue somebody or other oppressed by wild men and demons. And people talked of an underplot, in which poor Le Vallière was unconsciously concerned. But in the print all is proper enough: the King, in his great plumed hat, sitting, as a spectator, next to his lawful Queen, who is supported by her belle maman on the other side. And so the gay diversions go on, with intrigues, jealousies, heartburnings a little below the surface, as happens generally on such occasions.

As a pendant to this picture we have the King, old, and sad, and deserted by fortune, breathing his last in his grand bedchamber at Versailles, while about his couch a last intrigue was going on as to who should have the guardianship of the sickly boy, just five years old, who was about to become Louis the Fifteenth, and with that the Regency of the kingdom.

The Duc d'Orléans, as everybody knows, won the prize; and with the death of the old King, no more Versailles for seven long years. The centre of affairs was now the Palais Royal, and the road to Versailles, lately so thronged, was now a desert, while grass grew in the Royal courtyards. Versailles had been dull enough in the latter days of the old King, with Madame de Maintenon as keeper of his conscience. No more nights of high play, brilliant suppers, plays, and diversions; but, instead, plenty of masses, sermons, and a basin of gruel with Madame.

But under the reign of the "well-beloved"—who, by the way, was almost universally detested, and who dared not show himself among his loving Parisians, lest he should be pelted through the streets—under the reign, the terribly long reign of this Louis the Fifteenth, Versailles was almost as dull as under the "feu roi," and infinitely less respectable. In fact, the Palace was a sty with the King as Maître Cochon; and the official mistresses were, perhaps, the most respectable people there, saving the Queen and Princesses, who were good sort of people enough.

The Pompadour, cruel as she was, and unscrupulous, was still a clever woman, who had ideas, and who fostered, unwittingly enough, the new spirit that was breaking through the lethargy of the age. But a Versailles of which the Du Barry was the ruling spirit! Du Barry, perching herself upon the arm of the King's chair, as he sits in council with the Ministers of State, and pitching a bundle of compromising letters into the fire, represents the decent, avowable side of Versailles. The rest will not bear looking into. We must pass on to the end—that end so dramatically recounted by Madame Campan, when the King was lying stricken with the most virulent form of small-pox, and even the Royal physicians kept themselves at arm's length from the sufferer. The Dauphin and his wife are quartered in the farthest corner of the Palace, only awaiting the signal of the King's death, to fly from the pestiferous precincts, when suddenly a noise like that of thunder is heard resounding in the long corridors. There is a moment of fear, and then it is found that the sound proceeds from the footsteps of hundreds of courtiers and Court officials, who, the King having just expired, have come to pay their respects to the new Monarch.

Everywhere the new reign seemed to open with fair and pleasant prospects. It was a time of softened hearts and tender emotions, and all France felt kindly to the honest, amiable youth—who might have been a farmer's son from the provinces—and the bright and dainty young woman who seemed destined to reign over the hearts of all the French. Versailles had been cleansed and purified; the unclean mysteries of the Parc aux Cerfs had been swept away. A new era had begun of sentiment, taste, and simplicity. The huge sacs of brocade thrown over wicker frameworks, in which the Royal dames, caparisoned thus like donkeys, were wont to seek the Royal presence, gave place to light and gossamer costumes of clinging muslin, or charming robes de Jouy. The Court is at Versailles for parade and ceremony; but the favourite resort of the young Queen is the Petit Trianon, which is not far to seek in the park, by the great sheet of water. Here, with her cows, her dairies, and her ornamental hamlet, the Queen disports herself in an elegant pas-

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toral, assumes the name and costume of a shepherdess, has her little innocent flirtations with neighbouring shepherds, and bewails her griefs in appropriate verse. But, more than the shepherds, she loves her charming female friends, dainty De Lamballe, afterwards to be seen in sad exile in London, and her sweet, sympathetic De Polignac, whose fate was more cruel still.

Next we have the Versailles of just a century ago. The States-General have been convoked, and meet in solemn session at Versailles, the King presiding in his Royal robes. A Court painter draws the scene, a Court engraver reproduces the drawing. Revolutionary! no such thing; the assembly is as revolutionary as our House of Lords would have been with Convocation turned into it and mixed with the House of Commons, as it existed before the Reform Bill. But a spirit was abroad which carried every one with it, and the next glimpse we have of Versailles gives us the National Assembly which has just decreed the abolition of all privileges. A general enthusiasm has seized the Assembly. Deputies rush here and there, they embrace, they weep; it is as if the human family were reconciled all of a sudden, and had fallen into a passion of brotherly love. Still, we have the King's painter and the Court engraver to record the scene; but there the series ends. The next scene can hardly have been limned by an eye-witness; all about it was sudden and unexpected.

It was in the theatre of Versailles—the theatre which had been built for the Pompadour, but which was opened under her successor, the Du Barry. The gardes du corps give a banquet in the parterre; the boxes are filled with spectators; officers of the National Guard are among the guests; the tricoloured cockade is worn, for the King has not yet broken with the Revolution. But when the soldiers drink to the health of the King and the Royal house, their smothered feelings burst out in irrepressible enthusiasm. Sword in hand the toast is drunk, the trumpets sound the charge. Some one chants the well-known refrain of Blondel's song.

O Richard, O mon roi! L'univers t'abandonne.

At that moment the King appears in his box just as he has returned from the chase; the Queen is by his side, the young Dauphin in her arms. The enthusiasm becomes delirium, the tricolour is torn and trampled under foot, the white cockade is pinned on by fair and trembling hands. Will we abandon thee? Never! The Royal females weep for joy and exultation, and the hearts of all present are moved to the very bottom. The gentlemen of the National Guard have already retired, perplexed and troubled at the turn affairs have taken.

Three days after this began the march of the Parisians on Versailles. The tramp of them could be heard afar off, and mounted messengers hurried off to warn the King of their approach. But so little was he aware of the crisis in his fate, that he had been shooting all the morning, and was tranquilly writing in his diary the record of his sport, when the vast crowd surged into the courtyard of the Palace. Before night, the King was conducted in the midst of assembled thousands to Paris.

And there was an end to the life of Versailles from that time forth. The magnificent furniture, and a good deal that was tawdry and shabby, was thrown out of windows; what was not destroyed was sold to the brokers; and the great building, that might have held at times between three or four thousand inmates, was abandoned to silence and desolation. And none of the rulers of France have since cared to disturb its slumbers. It was Louis Philippe who at last restored Versailles, and utilised it as a public picture-gallery and museum, as it at present exists. He collected also such relics of its former possessors as could be rescued from various hands. The State bedchamber of Louis the Fourteenth is furnished with many authentic pieces, including the great bed in which the Monarch died.

As far as the neighbouring country is concerned, its interest is exhausted with Versailles. But, perhaps, Rambouillet is worth a visit by rail, where there are remains of the old château and feudal tower that sheltered, often enough, the old French Kings. Louis the Sixteenth bought Rambouillet from the Marquis of that ilk. The old place suited him; but his wife called it the froggery, and would have none of it, although he built dairies and cow-houses to suit her pastoral tastes. The Castle has a somewhat gloomy air and reputation, with the dark forest stretching beyond. The Empress Marie Louise stayed there for a time after her husband's abdication, and on her way to her former home. Napoleon spent a gloomy night or

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two there on his way to Saint Helena; and Charles the Tenth made it a stage in his progress to his place of exile in Scotland. Memories, these, which add no particular brightness or charm to the old place.

But there is a pleasant country of hills and meadows and cornfields along the valley of the little river Bièvre, with Jouy lying within three or four miles of Versailles. It is Jouy en Josas, to be precise, the latter being some ancient archdeaconry. And it was here that Oberkampf established a famous manufactory of painted or printed cottons. And the toiles de Jouy came into fashion again a few years ago, although only the name remains of the once famous establishment. And this way brings us to Sceaux, a prettily-situated little town placed upon a charming wooded hill, surrounded by Parisian villas and elegant pavilions. And here was the site of another famous château, famous at least in the memoirs of the eighteenth century, which had once belonged to the great minister Colbert, but which in those later days was the seat of the Duchess of Maine, where Voltaire was often a guest, and where the Duchess gave fêtes that lasted all night long, while her husband pored over his books and problems in his solitary tower. The château was pulled down during the Revolution, and the only relic to be found of the gay Duchess—it was she who instituted the order of the Honey Bee, forestalling the order of the Primrose League, with female Chevaliers and Knights of the Order—well, all that remains of the Duchess is the tomb of her favourite cat, which was somehow spared.

And from Sceaux the railway lands us presently in the Boulevard d'Enfer, and here is Paris again, with its crowded omnibuses and trams, and all the whirl and glitter of its many-sided life.

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER VII. THE BOND BETWEEN THEM.

"WHAT can I do?"

Rebecca lifts her head and looks earnestly and curiously at the girl who watches her. For the moment, the good that still lingers in this woman's nature is touched into life and vividness by the hand of tenderness and sympathy. But suspicion and distrust are ready to step in. She hardens her heart, and flings the above question at Mazie rather than puts it to her. It has a defiant, mocking ring.

"What can I do?"

"Spare him what you can. It is that which has brought me here to you to-day; it is that which has kept me waking all night long—the thought of his pain and the memory of his face when he came from you to me last night. I seemed to see his eyes in the darkness—so weary, so hopeless. Oh, if you ever loved him—as I am sure you must have done—do not try to sting and hit him with cruel words now! He wants to be your friend; he wants to help you. He wants to make you understand, and you won't—you won't! But women can sometimes understand one another's hearts better than any man can do. I thought if we spoke together—you and I—things might grow clearer."

But the evil spirit is not yet cast out. Rebecca hugs herself, rocking to and fro, while the low laughter of malignant cunning makes the girl—who is on her knees before her—shiver as she listens.

What a spirit is this with which Louis Draycott finds himself confronted! His duty to the woman—because of the past that lies between them—the duty that neither sin, nor wrong, nor time can obliterate; his duty to her as the man responsible for the "cure of souls" within those prison walls: these two strands forming a cord that binds him to her, and she ready to mock him at every turn, to misinterpret him, to throw him back upon himself!

How helpless Mazie feels, facing this cruel truth, and yet how strong, by reason of her love for the man whose sorrows and whose trials were to her as her own! Neither yet his wife, nor ever likely to be, she is still actuated by the truest spirit of wifehood, by that changeless love and fealty that shares all sorrows and all burdens, be they great or small.

With that deriding, bitter laughter in her ears she might well despair; for any fiend is easier to contend with than the fiend that gibes and jeers. But "love is strong as death," and Mazie has a child's unquestioning faith in help from above: in the strengthening of the feeble knees, the upholding of the drooping hands. Not in her own feeble strength, but in the strength of Heaven has she set out upon this quest of hers. Why, then, should she fear or fail? She will not be beaten back.

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Once already has she touched the erring heart that is now hardening itself against her; may it not, then, be given to her to touch it again? The laughter ceases, giving place to words.

"I thought I riled him up yesterday."

"You did, indeed. You hurt him cruelly. If you had seen him afterwards, when he came to me, I think you would have been sorry."

"Not I! He riled me up many a time, spying after me, and thwarting me, and balking me. There was no peace night nor day."

She is working herself up into a fury, and it is probable, had the matron been within ear-shot, she would have had her fears for the scant furniture of the prison cell.

But Mazie knows no fear. She presses closer to the woman's knee; prisons the working, restless hands; speaks with redoubled fervour; puts forth all her strength.

"If he thwarted you; if he balked you; if he watched over you, he did it all for your good, and you know it. Why, then, should you try to revenge it on him now? Think how deep his sorrows—his and mine — and have some pity on him! I am not afraid to speak of all this to you. Louis has done you no wrong, nor have I; and now, when we know we must part, we are going to be as brave over it as we can. You see it seems to me like this — we must all suffer, and there is nothing for it but to help each other all we can. We have grown to love each other so dearly—he and I—that it is like tearing some living thing limb from limb for him to have to leave me. When the time comes I hardly know how we shall bear it, or what the days will be like to live through when he is gone. It is like facing death even to think of it; but in all such times a woman can help a man by beating herself down as much as possible. There is surely time enough for her to lie down under the grief of it all when it is over. So, when we come to say good-bye—and it will not be long now—I shall pray that I may be strong for his sake — perhaps even smile upon him as he goes. Women have done such things before, and why not I?"

"You're not much to look at, but you're a plucky one, and no mistake," says Rebecca, regarding her visitor with a sort of reluctant admiration.

"I want to be plucky," she says, with a tremulous smile, "but it is hard wor sometimes; and now that I have told yo all about it, I'm sure you'll try and he me. We shall each try to help the other

This simple insistance upon an enti community of interests, a complete equalit a joint right of action, draws and touch Rebecca more than she herself is aware o No woman can lead the life into which sl had drifted, without coming across mar a bitter experience, being hit by many hard and cruel word, stung by many sneer. Sympathy and gentleness from h own sex is rare to such a one; for wome are harder to each other than men, ar hit one another when down withou chivalry or mercy. She feels then tl spell of Mazie's tender ways, yet is lot to yield; half believing, too, that may be what she, in her acquired argo calls a "plant," a snare set for son purpose that she cannot fathom.

"You know the girl I stuck the kni into is in a bad way?" she says, te tatively.

"Yes; but she may live yet. not——"

"If not, it's likely enough I'll swing fo it; that's what you're thinking of, I be That's what I said to Louis last nigh They'll string me up yet, and then I'll b out of your way."

"Yes, I know; I know," says Mazi covering her own face with her hands, a though to shut out the sight of the ev leer that disfigures the face opposit "You said that and much more. Yo wounded afresh the poor heart that is s sore already — wounded it to the cor Oh, how could you—you who have live beside him day by day in the years tha are past, and must have known that h could not feel and think like that—ho could you hurt him so?"

"It's the devil that's in me makes m act like that," says the woman, surprise into a fitful penitence by the passion an reality of the other's pleading; "I though to pay off old scores, and when I saw ho it riled him, I went on worse and worse— that's a way I have; any one will tell yo that. I take on worse and worse, an then I smash things—it's the devil that in me, that's what it is."

"It is no devil," says Mazie, comin closer still, and gripping the restless hand tight in her own; "it is your own hear that harbours such thoughts and feelings."

Unconsciously to herself, Rebecca i gradually moved, and the life that lie

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between the present and the past grows dim, fades, dies out. She is once again a gentlewoman, once again the companion of other gentlewomen.

"I will do what you want about Louis. I will not speak hardly to him any more."

The moment of victory is often more trying than the moment of effort. Tears are running down Mazie's face, tears of thankfulness and joy. The other wipes them away. So gently does she touch the poor, pale cheek, that the coarse linen handkerchief with which she does it might be of the finest lawn.

"Do not cry so," she says, softly; "I will do all you wish. Only tell me——"

"The time that I may stay is nearly over," says Mazie, now speaking fast and hurriedly, "and there is so much that I could say—so much that I long to say. Louis is not going yet; he will not go until the trial is over, and you know they have put that off for a while."

"Until they see if the girl 'Liza will die. Yes—he told me that. I hope she won't. I'm sorry I stuck the knife into her; I shouldn't have done it, if it hadn't happened to lie handy. It was her own fault, too. Why did she laugh when I said I was once a lady? They all know I can't stand being laughed at. When I've had a drop I get mad if any one laughs, and then I smash things. So I had to smash 'Liza that time. They all know that. 'You a lady!' she said—'the likes of you! You look like it. Tell us a better than that, if you want it swallowed.' And then I went at her. I'm sorry I did it now, any way. But I was a lady; and 'Liza shouldn't have laughed, and set me on."

"But you didn't mean to kill her; it was only your anger made you fly at her like that. You had no thought of murder in your heart? Tell me, quickly—the time is nearly up; I hear the Matron stirring; I have had such difficulty to get here at all—only for the Governor having known my father, I could not have managed it. Do not turn from me like that. Speak to me—tell me—— Oh! I shall have to go. Do not send me away like this."

Looking at her with narrowed, furtive eyes, Rebecca hesitates. The old demon of suspicion is stirring in his sleep.

"It isn't a—plant, is it? You arn't asking me things to use them against me, are you?"

"No, no; I am trying hard to help you. I am saying what others cannot say to you——"

"Trying to save me from——"

She girdles her throat with the coarse linen kerchief that had wiped away Mazie's tears, and gives it an ugly, yet artistic twist.

The girl tears it down, drawing her breath sobbingly as she speaks.

"Yes; trying to save you from that—trying hard. . . ."

Hitherto Mazie has kept herself well in hand. She has been cool and collected in spite of the tears she has shed; but now her pulses begin to beat hot and fast; her cheek is pale no more. A horrible fantastic vision rises before her strained and burning eyes.

She sees a sad procession passing through the pearl-grey dawn of a summer's morning. She sees this woman pinioned between two warders; following her comes the figure of Louis Draycott, clad in priestly robes, his white lips uttering the sacred words of hope and consolation; his face . . . .

Oh Heaven! How well she knows what his face would look like.

Can it be that this terrible thing shall come to pass? Must he see this woman who has lain upon his bosom, this woman whom he has vowed to love, and cherish, and to defend from every evil thing—look her last upon life and hope ere they cover her eyes from the light of the sun for ever? Can he meet that agonised gaze and live?

And yet Mazie knows that the man will not forsake his post; will delegate to no other the right to minister to the last to the woman who is still his wife; for whom he still holds himself responsible before Heaven and man alike.

Of the possible happiness for herself that might lie behind this possible tragedy, Mazie thinks not at all. The cloud that threatens to overshadow the man she loves is too black and terrible for her to look beyond it; and, in truth, none but the most callous heart could endure to pluck, even in fancy, a joy that must be culled across a grave.

An uneasy movement is audible outside in the corridor. Mazie catches and grips Rebecca round the arm.

"The time is nearly up. Tell me—tell me—you did not mean to kill her?"

"Not I. Why should I? I only wanted to punish her for laughing when I said I was a lady once. Why should she laugh? It was true, wasn't it?"

"Of course it was; but that doesn't matter now. Listen to me, Rebecca. Louis will not leave you; he will not go

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till the trial is over. He will get the best legal help for you; he will stand by you. For myself, I may not be able to come again. I will if I can; but, remember, if this girl you—punished—dies, and they send you to prison——"

"If they don't swing me for it, they'll give me ten years' penal. I know. I've got a pal—I mean a friend—who did five years . . ."

"Never mind that; time presses. I want to make you understand. If this thing should come about, I shall always be your friend; wherever they send you I shall go and see you—I think their rule is once in three months. It is not much, but it would be better than nothing, wouldn't it?"

Rebecca is beginning to look somewhat scared and dazed. It was one thing to feel that the possible or probable death of this woman whom she had "punished," gave her grand opportunities of jeering and gibing at her husband, herself all the while hardly realising any special personal danger in the situation of affairs; but it is quite another to stand face to face with this slip of a girl, with her earnest, tearful face, and have it brought home how precarious are her own chances and prospects.

"Does Louis really think they'll bring it in murder, if—she—dies?"

Rebecca is twisting her gown in her hands; her face has a sickly shade; her eyes are furtive no longer, only eager and frightened.

"He does not know. No one can tell. He is sorely troubled."

"I'd be a good riddance to both of you——"

"Hush! don't speak like that. You know you promised——"

"Well, I'm not speaking to him, am I? You don't matter, do you?"

"No, I don't matter, if it does you any good to speak like that; but I don't think it can; and, you know, it isn't a true way to speak. When I am gone you'll think things over more quietly; and I want you to be able to remember then all that I have told you about what we will do for you."

"I wish you weren't going."

"Why?"

"It's lonesome enough here all night and day, with nothing to watch but the light through that window up there, coming and going, coming and going, and never any change. There is no one but you and Louis to care what comes of me. I suppose he's told you my brother's dead?—and there was no one else. He wasn't much good, but he was somebody. He said I brought him to his grave with sorrow. But that's a lie—he brought himself there with his bad ways, the same as I've brought myself here with mine. If mother hadn't died, I might have made a better thing of life. Once she was gone, I had no chance—no chance—no chance. It doesn't sound like me to be talking this way; they'd laugh if they heard me. But I can't help it. I'd say a lot more if you could stay——"

"I wish I could," says Mazie, weeping—"I wish I could."

"Anyway, you'll tell Louis I won't try to rile him up again; and tell him I wasn't altogether bad to you, won't you? I don't want to be bad to you, but I've got in the way of it, and it's a hard way to get out of. Perhaps I'm better in here than out. If I got out I should take to the drink again—oh yes, I should! You don't know—it's like a hungry beast within you that must be fed. I expect I'm better here—if it wasn't so lonely. See, I'll tell you something I never thought to tell to any one. You know about that night—the night I came here, when I first met Louis? Well, it's against rules for the Chaplain to see any of us alone, but he broke the rule that time. I was his wife, you see, and he thought he had a right. I thought he was going to rate me for all I'd done—he'd good cause, you know, and I thought it only natural he should. Well, when we were left alone, what do you think he did? He asked me to forgive him; he said he had done wrong to—let me go, and had suffered for it ever since. That was an eye-opener, wasn't it? I can tell you, I stared — ay, and stammered, too, and didn't well know which way to look. I'd been smashing things — all I could — though there wasn't much to smash—it was a poor kind of a place—but I gave up after that. I scared them, I was so quiet. I had enough to think of, I can tell you; I kept feeling my hand where he'd touched it——"

There is a low tap at the door, and the disc of the spy-hole is raised.

"A moment, only a moment," says Mazie, under her breath; and Rebecca clings to her as a child might do to its mother in the dark. Their positions seem to be reversed. The woman has become a child, the girl a woman.

"There was a picture at home—I mean

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the home that Louis took me to when he married me—I remember it so well! It was St. Peter in prison. There was a great flood of light at one side; and in the midst of the light an angel come to strike his fetters off and set him free. You have a face like that angel—tell Louis I said so—he will remember where the picture hung, just beside his reading-chair."

The cell door stands open, and the Matron is making signals to Mazie. In another moment she finds herself — she knows not how—out in the corridor; and as the key grates in the door, she can hear a wild burst of weeping from within——

The hot July sun is streaming down everywhere, trying its best, or so it seems, to brighten even the gloom of the gloomy prison. The warder's canary, delighted with this jocund shining, is singing its shrill roundelays just as merrily as when its voice jarred so cruelly on Louis Draycott's ear the morning after he had kept cruel and bitter vigil.

And as the two pass the heavy portal that separates the women's side of the prison from the main corridor, behold two gracious little figures, linked hand in hand, tripping gaily to meet them. It is Bobby and "t' little wench" arrayed in all the glory of their "Sunday frocks," for they are presently going a-visiting. Smiling, happy little souls, are they, unabashed and unsaddened by the grim surroundings that to them have become but as a second nature!

"Don't be a bold boy, sir," says the Matron, severely, to Bobby. But Bobby heeds not, he has hold of Mazie's dress in the twinkling of an eye, and says to his small companion:

"You go on ze osser side of her, Tottie, then we be's nice and comfy."

Mazie does not find words come easily; but she cannot refuse a smile to this dainty pair.

As they all reach the porter's lodge, Tottie looks grave and pulls Mazie's gown to attract her full attention.

"Grandad isn't there now," she says, pointing to the door, the bosom of her pretty apron heaved by a long, sad sigh. "He can't say 'God bless you,' to you any more."

The child has heard the story of grandfather blessing the pretty lady so often that it is "familiar in her ears as household words."

"I'm sorry he isn't here to say 'God bless you,'" says Mazie, stooping to kiss the wee, serious face set in a tangle of curls, "for I need some one to say it to me very much."

"Her does be c'ying and c'ying," says Bobby, gravely, watching the visitor through the postern, and marvelling in his innocent little heart at a sadness for which he can see no cause.

But George discourages farther comments, and looks gravely, too, as he goes into the room where Joseph Stubbs lies fast asleep among the geraniums in the window.

"I dunnot know if I done right," he says to Bessy, as, half-an-hour later, she passes out of the gate with the two delighted children at her heels; "but it's this way. The pretty one we knows of, she's bin here, unbeknownst, I'll lay my life, to Mr. Draycott—but that's neither here nor there—anyway, she's bin here, and bid me good-day so sweet and gentle-like, my heart was like to melt in my body, and I couldna' bring myself to tell her as there's great news come. No less than this, Mrs. Mogeridge: the girl as that varmint stuck the knife into is dead and gone. It's true as true. They've taken her disposition, and she's dead and gone." Then George jerks his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the prison. "I hope she'll swing for it," he says, in a blood-curdling whisper; "'them as God has joined together let not man nor woman put asunder.' That's what the Book says, Mrs. Mogeridge; and if ever I saw two as God had made for one another, it's that there pretty one and our Chaplain. Heaven bless the two on 'em!"

But Bessy looks grave; and Bobby has to tug her hand ever so to make her listen to his prattle.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 28.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 13, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XI.

BROWNIE MAKES AN INVESTMENT.

On the following Thursday Mr. Anderson was dining at Eastwood. Mr. Litton's absence had been prolonged beyond his anticipation, and, as she sat in the drawing-room a little after nine o'clock, Mrs. Northcott speculated whether her brother would arrive by the train which was nearly due.

"I wish you had more control over that animal, Margaret," she said, frowning at Lion, who lay at full length on the hearth-rug. "He never used to growl in that way."

Brownie was not in the best of spirits, for she had been compelled to write asking Clement not to come again to Mrs. Clow's.

"Uncle Walter must have come back, auntie," she answered. "I had better chain him up;" and she whistled to Lion to follow her. Upon her return to the drawing-room she found that her suspicion was correct. Mr. Litton had already made his appearance. His right arm was suspended in a silk scarf, instead of the more clumsy leather case, and altogether his appearance was neater than when we first made his acquaintance; although there was still a certain devil-may-care air which led you to think him the most open-hearted, ingenuous fellow in the world.

"I do hope you have enjoyed your visit," said Mrs. Northcott, but he waved the suggestion aside as though it were quite beneath him.

"Thank you, Mary; but I did not go for enjoyment. Not so soon, you know; I shouldn't think of such a thing."

"Dear Walter!" murmured Mrs. Northcott.

"Well, why did you go to London, Uncle Walter?" enquired Brownie, with becoming simplicity.

"I went on business, Margaret," he replied, in a tone calculated to impress every hearer with the great importance of that business.

"You have never told us that Uncle Walter had any business, auntie," she persisted; whereupon Mrs. Northcott—herself tantalised by curiosity—reproved her niece for the impertinence of the remark.

"No matter, Mary," said Mr. Litton, "we invite enquiry. Enquiry is the breath of our nostrils, so to speak. If you will excuse me a minute, there is something—a little parcel in fact — I won't be a minute."

Maud closed the album she had been showing to Anderson, and they all awaited Mr. Litton's return with much curiosity. He did not keep them long, and, in a few moments Anderson was assisting him to unfasten a small brown paper bundle, from which he took a still smaller packet, handing it to his sister.

"Mary," he began excitedly, and appearing actually to shine with enthusiasm, "I meant to have asked you to accept this trifle a long time ago. But, what with my accident and poor Northcott's death you will forgive the delay, won't you? After all it is a mere bagatelle."

"Oh, Walter!" she exclaimed, when she had removed the tissue-paper covering, "how very kind of you. How beautiful—lovely! What a pity I am in mourning.

"Why, it is a nugget," said Maud, leaning forward to admire the present. "Did

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you bring it with you from North America, uncle?"

"Yes, Maud, yes — certainly; from my own mine. It is nothing—nothing at all; a mere bagatelle. Only virgin gold; nothing of any consequence. A mere bagatelle."

Whilst Mrs. Northcott continued to admire the nugget, and to thank the donor, Mr. Litton took a second and larger parcel from the brown paper and handed it to Maud, watching her as she unfolded her treasure with his face as flushed and his eyes as bright as they often were by that hour in the evening.

"This," he explained, "is only a little specimen of gold in the quartz. You can see the veins—there, you see. Pretty, aren't they, Maud? Look, Anderson. We crush it all up together, you know, and separate the gold-dust from the rest by means of quicksilver. Gold has an affinity to quicksilver—of course you know that. Lucky quicksilver, eh? Now it is your turn, Maggie," he continued, when Maud had duly thanked him. "Last, but not least, you know. Humph! I am sorry I haven't a better specimen to offer you; unfortunately, I did not put these things up myself. I left it to some one else, and this is the result. It is a piece of simple quartz, you see. Never mind; it isn't the value of a present, is it? It is the same kind of quartz as Maud's, only without the gold; that's the only difference. It is very chaste, isn't it?—all white, you see. If you put the two together under a glass-case, and stand Maud's in front—eh?—nobody will be any the wiser."

"I shall value it because it has come from your own mine, Uncle Walter," said this contented girl—"your very own."

"That's so," he answered, taking two or three sheets of paper from his pocket. "If you read one of these it will tell you all about it. You'll find it interesting, I can assure you. We are going to make the affair into a Company. I was never a greedy man——"

"Nobody could ever say that of you, Walter," said Mrs. Northcott, looking at her nugget.

"Thank you, Mary," he continued; "I rather think not. Thank Heaven, I'm always ready to share what I have with others. Who those others are to be," he added, looking around him, shrewdly, "must, of course, depend upon themselves. It would certainly be gratifying to know that I was benefiting my own flesh and blood——"

"That is so like you, dear Walter."

"Yes, I think it is, Mary—I hope it is. But, as I say, there is no compulsion. There it is—first come, first served. If those who are near and dear to me don't choose to take advantage of such a—I may say—golden—ha! ha!—such a golden opportunity, so much the worse for them. Just put one of those prospectuses in your pocket, Anderson. When you read it it will make your mouth water."

"And I have always said you were unfortunate, Walter!" exclaimed Mrs. Northcott, with an air of disappointment; at which Mr. Litton showed his black teeth, and chuckled audibly. Then, it being past ten o'clock, Anderson took his leave.

On the following Tuesday morning, Mr. Litton was alone in the study, a mass of loose papers on his right, a half-finished box of Clement's Intimidads on his left. He was disturbed by a tap at the door, and at once bundled most of the papers into a drawer.

"What, Margaret!" he exclaimed, "I thought you had all gone out."

"I wanted to speak to you, so I remained at home," she replied. "Perhaps you are busy?"

"Well, you know, I am rather busy," he said, holding the door only half-open so as to bar her entrance. "Won't it keep, Margaret; won't another time do as well?"

He regarded Brownie as a thorn in the flesh; for although she had lately seemed bent upon ingratiating herself with him, yet at times she had gone very near to offering him direct insults. He had also overheard her teaching Lion to growl at the mention of his name, and to whine when he heard Clement's.

"Oh yes, my business will keep," she answered, observing that he was gradually closing the door upon her. "I only wanted to speak about the mine——"

What a transformation! The words were a talisman. Wide open flew the door; back stepped its guardian, waving Brownie to a chair with the air of a polite dentist.

"So you want to say something about the mine. The prospectus has interested you? I drew it up myself, Margaret; I think it's pretty well done. Perhaps you want me to point out the exact locality on the map. Nothing easier, if you can only show me a map with it on, my dear girl."

"I think I understand whereabouts

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the mine is," she answered, "only I thought there were shares or something. If you don't mind, I should like to have a few. But if you would rather I did not, of course, it does not matter at all."

"My dear Margaret!" he cried, reproachfully. "You remember what I said the other evening. It is always the greatest pleasure to me to help my friends. Whether those friends are worth the trouble is another matter. Now, how many shares would you like?"

"I have not much money," she said, "how much are they, please? How many do you think I might take, just to begin with?"

"There are two thousand shares at ten pounds per share," he answered, consulting the prospectus; "four pounds payable on application, four on allotment, after which it is hoped no further call will be made. Now, as a friend, Margaret, I can't advise you to take fewer than ten. Ten I consider a very moderate number. You could not take fewer that ten, with what I call decency, you know. You will just fill up a form I shall give you. Have you got your cheque-book? That's right. Well, then, you will draw a cheque for forty pounds. Four pounds a share, you know, and then the whole thing is done with for the present. The shares will soon be allotted; then you will draw another little cheque for forty pounds; four pounds per share on allotment. You see, the whole thing is as simple as ABC."

"But," said Brownie, "I am afraid I can hardly spare eighty pounds this quarter."

"Oh, oh, so you are extravagant, are you? My little niece spends her money as fast as she gets it, does she?" he exclaimed, in great glee, as he rested his hand on her shoulder.

"I have only two hundred pounds a year of my own," she answered, rising abruptly, and thus shaking off his hand.

"When do you come of age, Margaret?" he asked.

"In November. I am a Guy, you know; my birthday is on the fifth."

"Then, I'll tell you what. Ha, ha; a Guy! Well it would be a pity to roast you, wouldn't it? Just give me a cheque for the first forty now, and sign this form of application, and I—yes, I will lend you the rest myself until your birthday. Then you can pay me back; and you might like to take a few more shares at the same time."

"Very likely," she said, and producing her cheque-book, she sat down to draw a cheque for forty pounds, payable to "Walter Litton, Esquire, or order." After which she also signed her name to a form of application for forty shares in the "New Colorado Wheal Reef Mining Company, Limited," in accordance with Mr. Litton's instructions.

"I am going to treat you just as if you were a total stranger, Margaret," he said. "There's no friendship in business. I shall write you a receipt in proper form, just as though I had never seen you before."

Slipping the sling off his arm, he began slowly and clumsily to sign the receipt. The letters were large and round, like those of a schoolboy, and every line was shaky in consequence of the swollen condition of his fingers.

"There," he said, putting his arm carefully back in its sling, "put that back in your pocket, and think yourself a very lucky girl. I guess I could double that five thousand pounds of yours in a twelvemonth, if you only came to me for advice. Double it? Ah, treble it."

"That is exactly what I should like to do," she replied. "I am so stupid over things of this kind. Uncle Walter, I don't want anybody to know about this——"

"My dear Margaret," he cried, seizing her right hand with his left and shaking it heartily, "you may trust me. I won't breathe a word. I am disappointed in the others, Margaret; especially in Maud—no spirit. I do like to see a little spirit in a girl."

"Wouldn't she take any shares when you asked her?" enquired Brownie.

"I didn't ask her. I ask nobody. I merely describe the mine and leave people to do as they like. A wonderful property—wonderful. But, as I tell you, Maud has no spirit. Upon my soul, Margaret, there is more sense in your little finger than in all the rest of them put together."

Throwing open the door, in his enthusiasm he would have bidden her farewell a second time.

"Thank you," she said; "but you did shake hands," and so she made her escape.

CHAPTER XII. INSPIRATION.

If any one had asked Brownie for what immediate reason she had taken those shares, she would have been puzzled to return a satisfactory answer.

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Realising the difficulty of proving the negative proposition that Clement had not forged his father's name, it only remained to show positively that the crime had been committed by Mr. Litton—that is to say, by some one acting at Mr. Litton's instigation.

Brownie believed that the proceeds of that forgery had, amongst other things, furnished the means to purchase the presents alleged to have come from North America. Mrs. Northcott, who had much money to invest, had received the most valuable gift; Maud, possessing less, had received less; whilst Brownie herself, from whom little could have been expected, had been presented with a stone.

But not only with a stone; for affixed to its jagged side was a small blue and white label, such as a collector might use to number his specimens.

Anxious to learn all that was possible concerning Mr. Litton, Brownie began to perceive that she had been unwise to allow herself to appear in the least degree antagonistic towards him. However distasteful it might be to worm herself into his favour with the idea of betraying him, this seemed the most promising policy to pursue, and its first practical result was the investment of her small capital in the gold mine.

Mr. Litton, for his part, was too well versed in the reading of the human mind to be surprised at Brownie's conduct. Of course the prospect of gain was enticing to her, as it was to thousands of wiser persons. He had seen so many shrewd men of business give the lie to their former records upon the mere chance of gaining much for little at no expenditure of brain or body, that Brownie was classed with a crowd of other imbeciles.

Upon drawing up his blind the next morning, Mr. Litton saw that the long spell of fine weather was broken. It had lasted long enough to enable the farmers to carry their hay, and now the timely change would serve to fill the ears of corn before the sun came forth once more to ripen them for the sickle.

Helping himself to a mackintosh of Clement's, which still hung in the hall, Mr. Litton set forth to the bank for the purpose of cashing Brownie's cheque.

"Too soon to say I'm off to London, again," he muttered, as he came forth from Sir Edward Spearing's office; then drawing his cape carefully round him, he took a somewhat unfrequented road which led to Eastwood.

He had not gone many yards when he saw some one coming towards him at a swinging pace; some one whom he only too easily recognised. But there happened to be no turning between himself and the advancing foe; so, putting a bold face to the inevitable, he averted his eyes and continued his way.

But Clement did not intend him to do so without interruption.

"Let me pass, confound you!" exclaimed Mr. Litton, as the other stopped dead in front of him.

"You scoundrel!" cried Clement, glaring at him through the small waterfall which ran from the peak of his cloth cap.

"You know I can't defend myself," said Mr. Litton, putting his lame arm obtrusively forward, "or you wouldn't dare——"

"Wouldn't dare!" shouted Clement, who now had him by the throat, "you know better than that. I would not stay my hand from killing a mad dog because he was wounded; why should I spare a dangerous animal like you?"

It was all very well to reason in this manner; but the man was too badly handicapped for Clement to work his sweet will upon him with an easy conscience. With a hearty shove he sent Mr. Litton sprawling on the ground a few yards away. He regained his feet, and the two stood confronting one another, heedless of the sound of approaching wheels.

"Good morning, Clement!"

It was Mrs. Oliver, seated on the box-seat of her husband's high dog-cart, and looking charming, even in her waterproof.

"A delightful day, is it not?" she continued, as the groom jumped down to the horse's head. "My truant husband has sent a telegram for some things, and here am I, like a dutiful wife, taking them to the station myself. If you like to jump up, Clement, I will drop you at your rooms."

"When you came up," he said, "I was just thinking of——"

"Of going home out of the storm. The wisest thing you could do. You don't introduce me, so I shall act for myself. Mr. Litton, I have known you by sight for a long time. Your broken arm lends you distinction, you know. If Clement won't come with me, perhaps you will?"

He needed no second bidding; and, before Clement could realise the posi-

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tion, Mrs. Oliver had thrown him a laughing good-bye, and driven off on the best of terms with Mr. Litton, congratulating herself upon her success in parting two men who were so plainly bent upon mischief.

Thanks to the training to which Brownie had been subjected by her uncle, she was very methodical in the keeping of her accounts, differing in this respect both from Clement and Maud, although they had been brought up under the same auspices. On the afternoon of the third of August, Brownie sat in her own room with an open account-book before her, a few cancelled cheques, some scraps of paper covered with sums in simple addition and subtraction, her banker's pass-book, and a bottle of eau-de-cologne.

Perplexity was on her face as she examined the back of the cheque which she had paid to Mr. Litton—perhaps the largest she had ever drawn. Opening her desk, she brought forth the receipt which she had seen him sign, together with a soiled envelope that he had received during the earlier days of his incapacity, and the writer of which still occasionally wrote to him. Placing these three specimens of handwriting close together, she bent over them for a critical examination; then, tilting back her chair, and passing her fingers through her unruly hair in a very boyish fashion, she continued to stare abstractedly out of window.

Suddenly the chair stood firmly on its four legs again. Light had come to Brownie. "Eureka, eureka!" she might have cried, for, indeed, she believed—rightly or wrongly—that she had found that which she had been so long seeking.

Before rejoining Maud and Mrs. Northcott, she wrote a letter to Clement—in defiance of her aunt's command—asking him to meet her outside Mrs. Clow's door on the following Thursday.

Never was an invitation received more gladly, coming as it did after several weeks of utter dreariness. It was true that Mrs. Oliver had succeeded in charming him again into a good humour, with the result that Captain Oliver's note-book contained another of Clement's little bills; but life, as a whole, seemed flat, stale, and unprofitable, and many a time had he regretted Brownie's request that he would remain at Middleton.

Seldom had he seen Brownie look so happy, never so beautiful; whether her black dress lent her a charm, or whether the dress itself was the debtor; whether the neat straw hat set off her face, or her sweet face set off the hat, Clement could not tell. As she came quickly to meet him, with her short, impulsive steps, with outstretched hands and flushed face, it was all he could do to hinder himself from falling at her feet and at once declaring himself her slave.

"Clement," she said, "I could not resist asking you to come, as soon as I had the least little bit of good news for you. Really, really, I do believe this trouble will not last much longer. Do be brave and hopeful just a little while——"

"And then, Brownie?"

"Then—oh—then—then you will be able to come home again, and everything will be just as it was before uncle's death."

"It can never be the same," he said, gloomily.

"Yes, yes, it can, Clement. I am sure I am on the right track, at last. I can see now—so clearly; the only difficulty is to prove it to the rest—to Henry Grayson, and all of them."

"Do you actually mean to tell me, that you know who forged the cheque, Brownie? that you know who actually wrote my father's name?"

"Yes," she said, "I believe I do know."

"For Heaven's sake, tell me then. I won't lose a second. I will expose the pair of them. Did he tell you that he met me the other day, and that I came within an ace of knocking the life out of him?"

"Yes—at least, I heard from auntie. If you act like that, you will spoil everything."

"You have not told me, Brownie. If you are so certain, tell me the scoundrel's name, and I will soon make his acquaintance."

"I cannot tell you yet," she answered. "You must take my word for it. I hold a clue; but I have no proof—nothing which would convince Henry Grayson. If I let you into the secret, I know what you would do; if my suspicion once became known, it would be met by ridicule, and never come to anything. But, I tell you that I know; I have made my first advance; and truly—truly, Clement, there need be no fear for the rest."

"Upon my word, it is too bad," Clement replied. "I thought that you knew for certain. A suspicion! What is the worth of a suspicion?"

"But, Clement, indeed, it is more than

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a suspicion. It is a certainty; or, at least, it will be. Not if I were to tell you now, though; if I did that, the whole thing would end in nothing. I must have calmer counsel than yours——"

"Anderson's, of course," he exclaimed.

"Oh," she said, hastily, "I have not told you about Uncle Walter's gold mine. Look at those clouds, Clement; aren't they beautiful? Your troubles will pass away just so. Let us sit down here a little while."

They had taken the path across the fields, and were near to the lane again. Clement had not the least objection to prolong the interview.

"What do you mean by his gold mine?" he asked, holding her in his arms for one delicious moment, as he lifted her to the top bar of the stile.

Then she told him all about the presents. "Uncle talks of nothing else but his mine and Mrs. Oliver—your friend, you know, Clement. Yes, it is a wonderful mine; you dip your hand in, and out it comes full of nuggets."

"You don't suppose he will find any one who is fool enough to trust him with their money?" asked Clement.

"At any rate, I can name two fools," she laughed. "Captain Oliver, for one——"

"Not he," said Clement; "Oliver knows too well what he is up to."

"Captain Oliver is to be what they call a director," she continued, "and I am the other fool, Clement. I wanted to ingratiate myself with Uncle Walter, and that seemed the only way."

"Rather an expensive way, Brownie. If Oliver has taken shares, depend upon it, he has not paid for them. You need not fear his being made a victim; he is the last man in the world to be used as a cat's-paw."

"Uncle Walter is always at the Nook," she said. "He seems to know Captain Oliver very well. He says he met him in Colorado. Captain Oliver is constantly writing to him—about the mine, I suppose. Please don't say I told you they knew one another. Uncle is always singing Mrs. Oliver's praises; I suppose there must be something nice about her, or you would not all be so eager for her society. By-the-by," she added, descending from her seat on the stile, "Mrs. Butterworth said she should write to you. She is very anxious to see your face at the fête."

"I had the letter yesterday," he admitted.

"Then you can't refuse to go," she continued, as she sprang from the stile. "But, Clement, Uncle Walter is sure to accompany Maud and me. You won't take any notice of him, will you? No more thrashings, if you please. Not that I should mind his being thrashed. I should rather like it—when it is all over. You can't think how I abominate him!"

He accompanied her as far as he could, without running the risk of being seen by any one at Eastwood, and then left her, to return to his lonely lodgings in the High Street.

A GREAT NEED OF THE PRESENT AGE.

This is an age of unrest. The wheels of life are for ever thundering around us; and when the harness is not actually galling our shoulders, it is constantly ringing and rattling in our ears. Every trope that can illustrate strenuous endeavour, feverish haste, tumultuous confusion, and the discordant clamours of a myriad battling Egos, may be fitly employed to depict the chaotic pageant. Not only in the region of action, but in that of opinion, the same agitation prevails. Many are the victories which have been won by the armies of Light and Progress, and we duly celebrate them in hymns neither few nor modest. Infinite is the vista of progress before us. We have overcome apparent impossibilities; we have reconciled apparent contradictions in the physical and moral world. We call this nineteenth century the "glorious product of the ages," and are not absolutely devoid of self-consciousness in uttering the eulogium. But, with all the possessions we enjoy, and all the trophies we have won, one supreme good has eluded us. Life has become a worn and weary thing—and we need Repose.

We are sometimes tempted to think that when man discovered and applied steam and electricity he raised two devils, which have for ever enslaved him; and that a side of the truth, at all events, is observed in regarding him as one among the many complicated machines which are driven by their agency. We run the hot race of existence as best we can; but, however jaded our powers, we must quicken the pace in answer to the prick of the electric spur. The furnace of the steam engine communicates its heat to the blood of every passenger in the

train; and all the ways of life are railways.

Those exquisite lines in the opening to the "Castle of Indolence"—

> A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
> Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
> And of gay castles in the air which pass,
> For ever flashing round a summer sky;
> There eke the soft delights that witchingly
> Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
> And the calm pleasures, always hovered nigh;
> But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,
> Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest,

come to us in these days with a soothing charm that is almost a physical sensation: "Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep."

Sometimes that humorous little Dutch picture, painted by "Diedrich Knickerbocker," seems, as we gaze and think, to receive us into its drowsy atmosphere; and there are times of mental and physical stress when we are inclined to envy those spherical old burgermeesters of New Netherlands the dozy quietude of their existence.

The governor was Mynheer Wouter van Twiller. "His face—that infallible index of the mind—presented a vast expanse unfurrowed by any of those lines and angles which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. . . . His habits were as regular as his person: he daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the four and twenty. Such was the renowned Wouter van Twiller—a true philosopher; for his mind was either elevated above or tranquilly settled below the cares and perplexities of this world. . . .

"The province of New Netherlands, destitute of wealth, possessed a sweet tranquillity that wealth could never purchase. There were neither public commotions nor private quarrels; neither parties, nor sects, nor schisms; neither prosecutions, nor trials, nor punishments; nor were there counsellors, attorneys, catchpolls, or hangmen. Every man attended to what little business he was lucky enough to have, or neglected it if he pleased without asking the opinion of his neighbour. In those days nobody meddled with concerns above his comprehension, nor thrust his nose into other people's affairs, nor neglected to correct his own conduct and reform his own character, in his zeal to pull to pieces the characters of others; but, in a word, every respectable citizen ate when he was not hungry, drank when he was not thirsty, and went regularly to bed when the sun set and the fowls went to roost, whether he was sleepy or not. . . . Everything, therefore, went on as it should do, and in the usual words employed by historians to express the welfare of a country, 'the profoundest tranquillity reigned throughout the province.'"

The harassed mind experiences a sense of calm even from the delicious irony of a description like this. But the weariest spirit quickly revolts at the idea of a repose that is purely sensual. The well-fed lethargy of the worthy Dutchmen is by no means to be set up as an ideal existence. And Thomson, leading us through those scenes of delicious languor in the first part of his allegory, brings us at last to view the miseries of soul and corruption of mind which attend upon indolence. It is undeniably true, however, that, physically and mentally, we are overdriven. But it is not by any cavilling at the conditions of modern society that we can hope to remedy the evil. Competition is the all-pervading spirit of the day, and the complaints of Socialists and Professors will not weaken its terrific energy. So long as men place the supreme good of this life in the things external to themselves, so long will the present stress continue. But when they become simpler in their desires, as a consequence of becoming more intellectual in their thoughts and tastes, life will be more quiet and deliberate, and a higher stage in the progress of the race be reached. Therefore, the repose to be aimed at first is repose of the mind, and this can only be gained by making the intellect stronger in action and more delicate in perception, so that it may find its rest in itself, and thus be independent of more precarious and exhausting forms of enjoyment.

We do not allow ourselves time to think of these things. Our work is with "the madding crowd," and so are our pleasures. In truth

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.

The discordant clangour of all its competitive brass bands is distracting and unceasing. The air is redolent of the frivolous cigarette. The newspapers have marched their columns into the Sunday to possess it, and on that "sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright"—wherein, at least, we might mount the Hill Contemplation and converse with the great and kindly spirits of literature and poetry—we

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turn our ears to the jargon of the racecourse, or listen while politician shrieks against politician. One half of our life is vexed with the worry or consumed with the fevers of business, and the other half is debilitated by trivial amusements or unworthy excitements.

Except the maxims of religion, which come to us staled by custom, and polarised —to use a phrase of Oliver Wendell Holmes—by all that is formal and commonplace in our teacher and ourselves, we receive nothing that is calculated to give our minds buoyancy to rise above these worldly perturbations and rest in a calmer atmosphere.

The physicians may write their periodical admonitions in the "Nineteenth Century," and point to the increasing prevalence of nervous disorders; but it lies not with them to "minister to the mind diseased" of this age and generation. The malady is sedulously instilled by an education, which leads us to invest our all of mental endeavour and spiritual tranquillity in objects which are infinitely trivial in comparison with the price we pay for them.

While we think all those thoughts, feelings, actions, to be merely dreamy sentimentalities, which are not convertible into a money equivalent, or, which do not reflect some modern craze; while the primal duties and all the lovely charities of life are taught simply as duties, and without reference to their relation with the sense of beauty which underlies all human good, and without the due emphasis upon the pleasure and peace which their exercise bestows, we shall be at the mercy of our troubles. The reasoning faculty of the age is active enough; it is the cultivation of the poetic sense, in its largest conception, which can alone help us to gain a proper mental equilibrium. And without this sense it is impossible for us to have the true perspective and discern the relative real importance of the things which make up life.

Looking at the prevailing ideals and methods of education in the middle classes of society—perhaps the allusion might be carried further—we must be struck with the utter absence of any conception of its higher functions in developing that side of the child's mind, which should prove a pleasant retreat from the cares of the world. Parents imagine they are doing all that can reasonably be expected of them in sending their children to a "good school." For the practical business of life a school alone can give the best preparation. But those gentle habits of thought which accustom the mind to delight in the visionary verities of the poet and story-teller have their value, and ought not to be left to the wild handling of chance. In some minds the fanciful needs pruning and directing; in others it needs stimulating. But we have no reason to doubt that its principle exists in all minds; and nowhere, surely, can its faculty be so well fostered as in the home, and through the interacting affection of father, mother, and child. The youngest mind is sensitive to a poetic and æsthetic influence, provided it is applied in a wise, unobtrusive way; not accompanied with grave, monitorial airs, but infused into the fresh, receptive spirit of the child through a hundred little home pleasures and duties. Childhood is the time, if ever, to form tastes and habits of thought which shall "grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength." Richter in his "Levana" has minutely noticed the effect which the ordinary surroundings of the home may have upon the growth of an infant's mind. In a fine passage of the same work he has instanced the grand and enduring sentiments which the ceremonies of religion could create in the mind of a little boy when attendance upon them was not so much enjoined as a duty, but proposed as an indulgence. Indeed, the youngest mind is capable of receiving a great deal more in the shape of ideas than we, who find it so difficult to gain new ones, may well imagine. We can all recollect among our earliest memories the feelings of awe, wonder, or delight, which etherealised very ordinary circumstances. It is the duty of a parent both to expand and direct this sense of the poetic in his child; and as he strives to provide for the physical and material well-being of his offspring so ought he to aim at endowing it with a quiet, lovely tract of mind, as a pleasaunce and repose among the vicissitudes of its later life.

The culture of his mind, towards which every young man in the middle classes nowadays fancies he does a great deal, reproduces the sordidly utilitarian character of ordinary juvenile education. A language or two, and shorthand are mastered. Perhaps some cant of literary or musical criticism is learnt for

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conversational purposes. It is of course very necessary that we should have some credit both with the banker and the world. But a culture which only has such objects is very meagre and unreal; and there is small evidence of the general cultivation of that quiet, self-dependent enjoyment of literature which is of such priceless value amid the frictions and discouragements of life. A very young man enters the world full of energy and confidence; and it is natural that he should look with some disdain at the maxims which imply defeat and disappointment. But when the evil days arrive, and troubles come hand in hand, the coarse habit of mind which learns only that it may earn, will not be that which can most easily feel the best consolation, or most readily respond to the highest encouragements. The miserable inadequacy of a man's educational accomplishments becomes thus apparent when he has to fly from himself into the distractions of society and amusement; or to retire into some miserable little brain-cell of self-sympathising sorrow, and chew the bitter-sweet morsels of misanthropic philosophy. In either case he has been led to depend too much on that which is apart from himself, upon the "milk and praise" of his friends, or on the fulfilment of his ambitions.

That is a very just point of view from which a man is appraised by his fellows, and which is necessarily the external point of view. But it should not be forgotten that there is another equally just point of view, from which he should regard himself and try to recognise his own value. From the former point he may be measured with tolerable ease. But to know what he truly is—that, indeed, is by no means so easy to the individual, while it is almost impossible to his critics. And it is on all hands very evident to us, from the low standard of mental pleasure with which men are satisfied, that they form a very erroneous estimate of their capacity for higher enjoyments.

Men are apt to think unduly well of some of their capabilities, and it is not unnatural in such cases that they should think unduly ill, or not at all, of others. It behoves a man who wishes to get the most happiness out of life, to appreciate himself, both with regard to his faculty for the higher pleasures, and for his actual and potential significance in the world. And if, with a sober mind, he pursues this train of thought, he will quickly come to feel that the greatest masters lived, thought, and sang for him, and will not be content with the tickling interest of the ordinary modern novel. He will see that we have not yet outgrown the teachings of that "glorified slave," Epictetus, who expressed this self-regarding philosophy in the directing of conduct; nor of Plato, who did the same, more particularly in the directing of thought. And the sense of the beautiful swayed both, and the secret of tranquillity was with them.

While Epictetus teaches us that only those things are really in our power which are concerned with our becoming and being true and good, that, in rightly using them, we satisfy a natural craving of the soul, which, unsupplied, fills the life with a vague disquiet, we feel that there is a charm in the "divine philosophy" of ancient literature which, did we but take the pains to learn it, would keep the sky bright above us, and the air quiet around us amid all the storms of life.

The errors of the Stoic are not likely to be seconded by our impulses, while his noble appeals to the deep realities of our existence have a power to quicken and fortify the most languid spirit. A mind cultivated to a keen perception of the beautiful in art would crave no higher boon than the power to create that which it admires, and so express its own yearning to the ideal. A mind attuned to the music which Plato taught, the harmonious exercise of all its faculties, both in thought and life, would perceive that loveliness in conduct which is called virtue, and desire that generation in the beautiful which Socrates describes in the "Banquet" as the highest love. The Christian is not rendered less one by such studies, nor is the infidel made less amenable to the influences of religion.

If a man be accomplished in the sense of poetry, whether expressed in music, art, or literature, he will be the better able to distinguish between apparent realities and real ones; to apply a Berkeleian philosophy to the things for which men fight, envy, and hate one another, and distinguish their futility by the touchstone of his tranquil mind. Thus his liability to disappointment will be diminished by the concentration of his desires upon that which is in his own power, and his independence of soul be increased, for he will feel that none of "the whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-

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tumely," can interfere with the enjoyments which the excursions of his mind through the fields of literature and art can afford him. He can retire at the end of every day's labour from all the sordid vulgarities and pettinesses which he may be compelled to endure, to a Palace Beautiful; and, by converse with the grand and lovely spirits of the past, be enabled to utterly forget the mean and despicable ones of the present.

There is nothing new in all this. It is a faint echo of a very old philosophy. Yet it ought to be remembered that even a truism is not necessarily a sufficiently comprehended truth. Familiarity with a phrase is one thing; the realisation of the truth which it expresses is quite another thing. An æsthetic movement, which was speedily damned by its own extravagances, was set on foot a few years ago. Its evangel was the culture of the beautiful. Yet this old idea, which if advocated in any form of words, would appear disgustingly trite, came with the force of the maddest of novelties when the attempt was made to apply it in some concrete form to the actual surroundings of men. And if the eccentricities of the æsthetic school partially explain the astonishment with which their gospel was first received, they also prove how signally the preachers themselves failed to grasp the significance of the old doctrine. It is not so much by the machinery of "schools" and "cults" and "movements," and reading-society "culture" competitions, as by the silent, gradual influence of a better home-education, and a diffusion of higher literature among the upper and middle-classes, that this sense of the reality of poetry and literature can be created and sustained. As the feeling prevails, its influence will extend through all the intricacies of life. Men will become more solicitous to enjoy their lives, and less anxious to increase their fortunes as they become capable of the most enduring pleasures, and find them the least expensive. The frantic rush to El Dorado will abate, for succeeding generations will prefer to wander at sunset along the banks of the Ilyssus or the Avon.

"We must not expect Philosophy to produce with one stroke of the pen the converse effect to that which Rubens produced when he converted a smiling child into a weeping one with one stroke of his brush. It is sufficient if she converts the soul's deep mourning garb into half-mourning."

Thus Richter. And though this cultivation of our faculties for delight in poetry and beauty everywhere—in pleasant green fields and shining rivers; in happy faces; in the mighty harmonies and tender strains of music; in the loveliness and grandeur, varied as human nature, of literature, with all its accompaniments of laughter and tears—though this culture cannot divest us of our human liability to the burden and heat of these feverish days, it can, at anyrate, for every evening-time, provide "a bower quiet for us, and a sleep Full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing."

ROUND ABOUT PARIS.

SAINT GERMAIN AND SAINT DENIS.

At Saint Germain one breathes again. Heat, and dust, and turmoil are left behind as the pleasant heights are reached. Life goes easily at Saint Germain, about which something of well-bred dignity and repose seems still to spread a charm. And for surroundings, where should we find anything to equal the grand terrace, with its calm shade and royal magnificence of extent? In front stretches the fertile river plain, where the Seine pursues its winding way, with tufted banks reflected here and there in quiet reaches. On one hand appears the aristocratic little settlement of Maisons, where charming villas appear, seen among the trees of the park of the fine old château. In another direction the view is bounded by the woody heights of Marly-le-Roi. Bright gleams of the river show on either side of the dark woods of Vesinet. Far away in the distance, rises the hill of Montmorency, which gives its name to the proud family that claims the title of first Baron and first Christian of France; and there, too, rises the spire of Saint Denis, the warning finger that pointed out mortality to the royal owners of these noble domains.

And as evening approaches, and the great river plain is suffused with a roseate glow, and woods in velvet tufts, and meadows, and lines of poplars, and village spires, and gloomy château with geometric lines of avenues are scattered here and there on the fair landscape, the hill of Montmartre shines out over the dusky haze of Paris, and Fort Valérien on the other side mounts guard over the city.

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There, too, the Arch of Triumph—outlined against the sky—reveals itself as the noble portal of the magnificent city; and the gilded dome of the Invalides shines out from the gathering gloom. And we may watch for the electric beam that is to shine from the Eiffel Tower, announcing the crowded, glittering fête below, of which the gay whirl contrasts so strongly with the tranquillity of these quiet shades.

About the terrace of Saint Germain linger still the memories of the exiles of a lost cause. Here they paced and talked—the banished lord, the exiled courtier, the soldier serving under an alien flag. To some, the scene would recall the links of Forth, as seen from old Stirling town; but to him the scene would be wanting in so much that made up the beauty of his own home landscape.

> The sun shines bright in France,
> And fair sets he;
> But he has tint the blink he has
> In mine ain countree.

Sad and gloomy indeed was the Court of the exiled King, where priests and confessors had everything their own way. But the King was nobly lodged by the munificence of Louis le Grand, and as for being a pensioner of the French King, that was a circumstance that must have sat lightly enough on the mind of a Stuart. But for those faithful followers who had sacrificed everything for the King, there was but scanty welcome at Saint Germain unless they were of the monkish sort.

Of the old palace, in which King James the Second spent the years of his exile, only a single pavilion remains, which forms part of a restaurant, greatly resorted to by the Parisians, who, if they trouble themselves at all about its associations, have more to say about the bonhomme, Henry the Fourth, who built it: the gay monarch who was always gallanting or gambling, and always in want of money for both pursuits; but whose charitable desire, that every cottage dame should have a chicken in her pot-au-feu, has earned him more good-will than perhaps he deserves.

The Château Neuf, from Henry's time, became the chief country seat of the French Kings, till Louis the Fourteenth forsook it for Versailles; deserting one of the finest sites that can be imagined for a noble palace, in favour of one essentially commonplace and mean. When our King James took up his residence in the Château Neuf, he was, perhaps, better lodged than he had been in any of his own palaces.

In this house he died, in 1701, and his widow, Marie d'Este, seventeen years afterwards.

With the death of Louis the Fourteenth and the Regency of the Duc d'Orléans, the attitude of the French monarchy towards the House of Stuart changed altogether, and James Edward — whom Louis had formally recognised as the heir of England, at a death-bed visit he paid to James in the same Château—ceased to be a welcome guest.

As to the building itself—the home of the exiled King—it owed its final destruction to the orders of the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles the Tenth, who, in 1776, had it pulled down, intending to rebuild it upon a more magnificent scale. But circumstances put a stop to this—very serious circumstances, in the way of revolution and exile.

As for the old Château, which stands in more intimate relations with the town, and which was long the favoured home of the old French Kings, its fortunes have been more varied. There was an older Château once upon the site, with memories of Saint Louis and the Crusades, and even earlier days. But that was burnt and destroyed by our Black Prince, who might have earned his name from the black patches of fire and rapine that he left as his marks upon fair France. But Francis the First was the real founder of the present edifice. The Château still exists, restored to its ancient form, and utilised as a public museum of antiquities, after having suffered many strange changes and adversities. It is Francis who gives the key-note to the dominant impressions made by this relic of old France — Francis the gay and debonair, who rides forth to meet our Harry the Eighth on the Field of the Cloth of Gold: Francis, who loses all but honour on the fatal field of Pavia: Francis, the founder of Havre de Grace, and who built a big ship there—the biggest ever known, bigger than our "Harry Grace à Dieu"—which contained a tennis-court within its lofty wooden walls; a ship so big that she could never be got afloat, but rotted on the slips where she was built.

The once gay and stirring monarch had fallen prematurely old and decrepit before his death, so that his young mistress, the Duchesse d'Etampes, had become the chief influence in the kingdom. With the death of the old King and the accession of his

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son Henry, naturally the aspect of affairs was altogether changed. Now it was the young King's elderly mistress, Diane de Poitiers, who was virtually the ruler of the kingdom.

In the intrigues and imbroglios among those who worshipped the setting or the rising suns, originated a quarrel, which was settled by a judicial combat, the scene of which was the plateau in front of the old castle.

Among the most favoured courtiers of the late reign had been Guy, Vicomte de Jarnac, the brother-in-law of the Duchesse d'Etampes, and, if the scandal of the Court was to be believed, connected with that lady by less avowable ties of sentiment and affection. Anyhow, he was the chosen champion of the Duchesse, and the shafts of his wit had often rankled in the retentive mind of Diane. Her age, her supposed infirmities, had been made the subjects of ridicule in the intimate circle about the old King. The counter-stroke was subtle and feminine. De Jarnac's father had married a second wife, young, rich, and charming. Certain innocent words of De Jarnac, as to the kindness shown him by his stepmother, were twisted by the Dauphin into a sinister meaning. Everywhere Henry spread the cruel rumour—that De Jarnac had been guilty of the vilest conduct. De Jarnac, finding out or guessing the source of the evil things that were said against him, denounced, in the presence of the Dauphin, the author of the scandal as a mean and despicable coward. A champion was at hand to take up the challenge. A chosen friend of the Dauphin was one François de la Chataigneraie, the cadet of a noble house, one of the best swordsmen and strongest men of his day—a man of steel and iron, who could overthrow the best of the Bretons in a wrestling match, and meet on equal terms the cunningest Italian professor of fencing. This bravo, who had been the hero of many combats, out of which he had always come successfully, took everything upon himself. He had made the injurious statement; he maintained it; and what then?

De Jarnac sought permission of the old King to fight his slanderer, but was peremptorily refused. And now his life became a burden to him. Everywhere he met with insults, ridicule, taunts. His father, his stepmother, his whole family shared in his disgrace; and the death of the old King, which was so unfavourable to his worldly interests, came to him as a relief from an intolerable state of things. Among the first who presented themselves to demand favour from the new monarch, were the old Comte de Jarnac and his son, praying that the latter might be permitted to vindicate his own and his father's honour, by ordeal of battle with his accuser. The prayer was at once granted, and preparations were made for the combat, which was to take place on the open ground in front of the Château, and to the east of it. The day was fixed—it was the tenth of July, 1547—and the Court of the young King and of Diane prepared to celebrate its triumph, for nobody doubted but that the result of the fight would be an easy victory for the King's champion, and death to his opponent.

De Jarnac prepared himself devoutly for his approaching end. He was taller than his adversary, but of delicate frame and no great strength—a mere vase of porcelain opposed to a vessel of solid brass. The brawny hero of the Court went about everywhere ridiculing his foe and rehearsing his approaching triumph. De Jarnac, meantime, while making his peace with Heaven, did not neglect his preparations for the combat. The women who were interested in his welfare secured a renowned professor of fencing from Italy—one skilled in every feint and device, and acquainted with cunning thrusts of which he alone had the secret. The Italian studied Chataigneraie as an artist studies his model, marked his strong points and his weak ones; the latter, indeed, almost wanting, except that from an old wound one of his arms—not the sword-arm it seems—moved a little stiffly.

The news of the judicial combat of Saint Germain had spread all over France with the scandal that occasioned it; and everywhere the conditions and probabilities of the fight were discussed. The poorer noblesse of the provinces travelled up in shoals to become witnesses of the combat; figures in old pourpoints, and mounted on ancient Rosinantes, who camped out in the adjoining forest, dining on dry bread moistened with water from the brook. The higher nobility displayed themselves in gorgeous equipments, with bands of gentlemen about them all radiant in their patrons' colours.

As the day approached, Paris itself came bodily on the scene with all her mummers and maskers, her brawling students, her mutinous artisans, her sturdy bourgeois, her lawyers and doctors in their

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long black robes, with all the numberless traffickers and loungers of her streets. Men, women, and children all poured upon Saint Germain, so that the scene resembled a gigantic fair, the turmoil and confusion, the laughter, horse-play, and scurrilous jests contrasting strangely with the stern grim purpose of the meeting.

At six in the morning the lists were opened, the crowd took their places, the nobility arranged according to degree on stands and stages, the general crowd hustling each other at the barriers, while the windows and roofs of the palace were crowded with more or less privileged spectators.

Everything was done according to established precedent, as handed down from the days of ancient chivalry. In his richly-broidered tabard, Guienne herald-at-arms marches out to meet the assailant De la Chataigneraie, who enters the lists amid loud flourishes of trumpets and the ruffle of drums, led by his sponsor, François de Guise, and followed by a train of three hundred gentlemen in his colours of white and crimson. Round the camp the whole cavalcade ambles gracefully, and then the champion retires to his tent. He is as gay as a bridegroom, and so confident of the result that he has invited the whole Court to supper at the end of the battle. The tables are already laid, bright with silver and porcelain. The King had a fine taste in faïence, as collectors know who prize the Henry Deux ware with the interlaced crescents, the symbol of the fair Diane, above gold and rubies.

De Jarnac made his entry in more modest fashion. He had ordered his grave, and paid for masses for his soul, and expected to sup that night in Paradise. But as he rode round the lists the voices of the people cheered him. He was their champion after all; they hated the cold Diane, who thought of nothing but fleecing them. The country nobles, too, gave him their voices. But from the royal tents and the tribunes where sat the King and Diane in her scornful beauty, no word of greeting or encouragement was heard.

All the long, hot summer's day was occupied in settling the preliminaries of the fight. According to the ancient laws of the duello, valid still where the duel is an existing institution, the choice of weapons rests with the person assailed whether in honour or in person—in this case De Jarnac. By the advice of the Italian professor, he demanded the use of the panoply and weapons which had long since gone out of use in single combats, the heavy lance and long-pointed double-edged swords, the coat of mail, the gauntlets and bucklers of steel. Each item of the list was the subject of long and animated discussion. The knowing ones blamed the advisers of De Jarnac for insisting on this cumbrous array, in which the strength and vigour of his brawny adversary would give him every advantage. But the books and records of the heralds showed that such had been the equipment in former judicial combats, and point by point was conceded in favour of De Jarnac's contention. The judges who decided were the Marshals of France, and the Grand Constable was the ultimate referee.

The discussion lasted till seven in the evening, and, with heat, fatigue, and expectation, the spectators, as well as the actors in the ceremony, had reached a point of feverish excitement. Then it was announced that all was settled. The lists were cleared; the heralds proclaimed the combat; trumpets sounded; the combatants advanced into the arena.

"Let them at it, the good combatants." And to it they went, these strange, iron-clad figures, while long shadows were falling over the terraced heights and soft-smiling plain.

It had been agreed that the battle should be fought out on foot to the deadly end; and the sturdy champion of the Court advanced against his taller adversary, lunged and thrust, driving back his man, who, covered with his buckler of steel, stood upon the defensive. Then, of a sudden, the latter raised his sword and aimed a downright blow. To a master of fence, such as Chataigneraie, this should have been the opportunity for a fatal thrust, as, in raising his arm, De Jarnac exposed the weakest point of his cuirass; but the suddenness, the irregularity of the attack, disconcerted the skilful fencer. The blow descended upon his thigh, he stumbled, was lost, for a second blow almost severed his limb from his body, and he fell bleeding upon the plain.

A breathless silence fell upon the multitude as De Jarnac, sword in hand, stood over his fallen foe. He would surely give him the coup de grace. But it was in terms of entreaty that De Jarnac cried to his prostrate foe: "Give me back my honour; own me a true man." The other glared at him, but answered not a word.

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Then De Jarnac ran to where the King was sitting, pale and gloomy, in his state, and, falling upon his knees, he cried: "Sire, I give you La Chataigneraie, take him, but give me back my honour." The King remained mute.

Then De Jarnac returned to his bleeding antagonist, and conjured him, by their old friendship, to restore his honour, and accept his life at his hands. The wounded man made a desperate effort, rose to his knees, and aimed a fierce blow at the other, but fell down again helpless.

"Kill him!" cried De Jarnac's friends; but the good fellow had a tender heart, and could not do what was expected of him. He appealed again to the King, who again vouchsafed him not a word. Then, in his trouble, De Jarnac went to where Diane was sitting, cold and pitiless alike for friend or foe. "Ah, madame, you told me he would never forgive!"

And their champion was lying there bleeding to death, while this iron-hearted pair sat there mute and implacable! A movement of impatience and disgust passed through the whole assemblage. The King was moved at last. He called De Jarnac to him, and, in cold, set terms, pronounced that he had acted valiantly, and then hastily retired, leaving who would to succour the vanquished champion.

When King and Court had retired, a great tumult broke out. The Parisians had heard of the grand supper prepared in anticipation of the favourite's victory, and made a rush for the pavilions, where the tables were laid out, overturning and scattering it all, while nimble thieves secured the silver plate. The King let loose guards and archers upon the crowd; sword-thrusts and slashes were showered upon them. Some were left dead upon the field, while the main body of the Parisians dispersed in tumultuous flight towards their own city, many limping and half-disabled from wounds received in the affray. But, ever after, the survivors could talk of the famous "coup de Jarnac."

As for the unhappy Chataigneraie, he lay in the torture of his wounds, vainly hoping for some word of kindness — a message even from the King in whose cause he had fought. None such came, and, in his grief and rage, the poor wretch tore the bandages from his limb, and presently bled to death.

The Parisians have not forgotten the way to Saint Germain. They come in crowds sometimes, as at a fair that is held at "Les Loges," a little clearing in the midst of the forest behind the château, where, at other times, a pleasant secluded track leads among the haunts of the deer and wild boar. For the chasse still goes on at Saint Germain-en-Laye, with winding horns and baying dogs, and piqueurs in scarlet and gold, although the Kings—the old masters of the hunt—have departed to the shades.

There is a fine drive across the forest, by public "voiture" if one chooses, for an odd sixpence, to fishy little Poissy, charmingly placed upon the river, the double spires of the church showing over the trees; but not a charming place in itself, although the long bridge with its many arches and watermills at work between is an interesting sight. For here you come upon the Seine again, after it has made a tremendous double, enclosing some eleven thousand acres of forest, with villages, châteaux, and mansions within its ample fold.

Although the spire of Saint Denis may seem to beckon us from Saint Germain, yet it will be the easiest way to reach the venerable abbey through Paris itself.

There is one station that we pass between Saint Germain and Paris, that excites a certain curiosity. As the porters nonchalantly call out "Rueil," one thinks of the terrible Cardinal, who hereabouts had his dwelling—a veritable ogre's castle, secluded among the woods, with deep fosses, and lofty walls; where Richelieu would lie in ambush, till one day the victim would come riding gaily into the trap; and then, after short trial, and shorter shrift, in would come Monsieur de Paris to speed the traveller on his way. So we may remember the traditional guest for Rueil, who dines happily at a cabaret on his way, and meets with a pleasant, gentlemanly fellow, who cracks a bottle with him, and the pair become so friendly that, on leaving, the stranger whispers his name and destination. He is the headsman, and he is invited to meet Monsieur: Monsieur thereupon taking the hint, and saving himself in foreign parts.

The enceinte of the ogre's castle may perhaps be traced, but there is no other memorial left of the great Cardinal; except, indeed, the church, which he reconstructed and beautified, but which has been severely reconstructed since, and is now chiefly concerned with the monuments of the Beauharnois family; of Josephine, the Empress; of her daughter, Hortense, the

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mother of the late Emperor. Malmaison is not far off—and may be reached by tram — with gardens, where Josephine loved to wander. She was dead ere the "hundred days" of her hero; and Napoleon visited the place sadly after Waterloo, and made his last adieux there to the veterans of his old guard. But perhaps one need not trouble oneself much about Malmaison, unless one is devoted to the Napoleonic legend.

When we come to Saint Denis — which, perhaps, has been painted in imagination as a stately kind of place, surrounded by quiet, gloomy avenues, befitting the storehouse of the royal bones—it is rather disappointing to find it just a suburb of Paris, and not much of a suburb at that. Saint Denis is industrial, manufacturing, and anything but regal in its surroundings. And though there is a fine west front to the abbey that puts into the shade the similar aspect of Westminster Abbey, yet it strikes us that on the whole our old English Kings are better lodged there, and there is nothing so authentic and venerable at Saint Denis as the tomb and shrine of the Confessor in our own Abbey. But then we have had no general clearance such as happened at Saint Denis, when the bones of all the old Kings were thrown to the winds, and their leaden coffins melted down for bullets. Still, for those who have faith, there are the tombs of the Kings; and we may recollect that the abbey has been a sacred place from very early times, with memories of Fredegonde and Dagobert, and lines of Carlovings and Merovings. Then we may remember the oriflamme, the sacred banner of France, that always reposed on the high altar of Saint Denis until the King should take the field in person. Curiously enough it was not the Crown that had the original right to the flag; for it was as the bannerers of Saint Denis that the Kings of France bore the plain red flag which in time came to be regarded as the symbol of the armed monarchy.

There is perhaps no more ancient gathering in existence than the fair of Saint Denis, which was chartered by Dagobert the First, A.D. 629, and has gone on ever since; no longer, indeed, the resort for merchants of every clime, but as much appreciated as ever by the consumers of "pain d'épices" and "plaisirs."

Saint Denis lies low, in the centre of the river plain, but we come to hills presently; and on the top of the most prominent the little town of Montmorency, which is something like Esher as far as situation goes. And, as we get a glimpse of Montmorency from Saint Germain, so now can we gain a view of the terraced heights of the home of the old French Kings. The fertile plain stretches out between, the river dimpling here and there, and its course marked out by lines of poplars and verdant prairies.

ON THE BALANCE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was the afternoon of a dull February day, and darkness was closing in all around, as we rode homewards together, Maude Bradford and I, after a long and exciting run with the Vineyard hounds. I had piloted my companion successfully through a somewhat difficult country; but we were still a good way from home. Our tired horses plodded slowly along at the pace that suited them best, while their riders forbore to press them; although these last were not without apprehensions of a scolding when they reached home, for being so late.

I had long been in love with Maude; but I had never before mustered courage to tell her as much. But now she looked so handsome and bewitching, and smiled upon me so kindly, that I tumbled into the avowal before I knew what I was about. And Maude was neither surprised nor angry. She blushed a little, smiled, looked down at the plashy road, and up at the murky sky—where a sulky gleam of sunlight still lingered—and then she turned to me with a happy light in her eyes that was not to be mistaken.

"It is all right with me, Frank," she said, as I seized her disengaged hand; "but you will have to talk my father over first."

Mr. Bradford had accompanied his daughter to the meet; but we had left him behind at the first fence, looking out for a gap which, it appeared, he could not find. No doubt he had ridden home, and would have something to say to us on our return. But at the next turn of the road we overtook him, and at the sight of him our horses' heads diverged, and we rode a great deal further apart than before. But Mr. Bradford was in great good humour. He had managed to see a good deal of the run, by judicious short cuts along miry lanes, and he was so pleased with his own

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performance that he looked indulgently upon our escapade.

"Come in to dinner, Frank," he cried, as we reached the grassy ride that led directly to the Grange, which the Bradfords had inhabited for several generations.

I had a mind to excuse myself, for I was weakly desirous of postponing the operation of "talking over" Mr. Bradford to a more propitious occasion; but an encouraging gesture from Maude made me accept the invitation.

Not that there was anything formidable about Mr. Bradford. Indeed, he was the best friend I ever had. He had been my guardian, and the trustee for the little property that I inherited from my mother; he had placed me in his bank when my education was finished, and was giving me a larger salary than perhaps I deserved. All the more, I felt that I was making an ungrateful return, in trying to win his only daughter, for whom he might fairly expect a more brilliant alliance. For, though I was well enough off, as a bachelor—could afford to keep a horse and take a day with the hounds occasionally—yet my annual budget was but a poor affair, after all. And, then, although, as far as family connections were concerned, I was, at least, equal to the Bradfords, yet there had been something queer about my father. He had come to grief in some way or other, and had left my mother to break her heart over his desertion. Not that she would acknowledge that he had deserted her. He had only gone away to find fortune and a home for her on the other side of the Atlantic.

But my mother never heard from him again, and I know that his neglect brought her to the grave. Yet, to the last, she loved him, and wore a portrait of him always in a locket next her heart. On her deathbed she gave me this locket, and made me promise that, if ever my father and I came to meet, I would be a dutiful son to him—a promise that I made with some reservations, for I had come to hate him for his neglect of her, and had promised myself that, when I came to be a man, I would make him suffer for what she had endured. But these boyish impressions had grown feebler now, and, with the advent of my passion for Maude, had almost disappeared, and my chief anxiety was lest her father should make it a point against me, that I might prove, after all, "a chip of the old block;" for I had heard people say "how like young Forester grows to his father."

Dinner at the Grange passed quietly enough. There were no other guests, and Mr. Bradford retailed the various episodes of the day's hunting to his wife, who smiled pleasantly, and now and then put in a word, which was all her husband wanted to keep him going. Maude was even more nervous than I, and when she followed her mother from the room, and I ventured to squeeze her hand in passing, she gave me an anxious, half-frightened glance, as she whispered, "Don't be long." And then, screwing up my courage, I took a seat at Mr. Bradford's side, and plunged at once into what I had to say.

With his head supported on his hand, Mr. Bradford listened to me in silence, gravely, and even sorrowfully, it seemed to me.

"My dear boy," he said, when I had finished my story, "I ought to have foreseen this, and prevented it. But, after all, perhaps it is only a young man's fancy—and a girl's. Can't you give it up?"

I shook my head, and was in the way of explaining what a vital affair it was for both of us, when he interrupted me.

"I will take all that for granted, Frank, and, if that were all, I don't think I should prove hard-hearted. But if you persevere you will drive me into explanations that may be painful to both of us."

With that he rose and, unlocking a drawer in his escritoire, drew out a small parchment-covered volume.

"Frank," resumed Mr. Bradford, laying his hand kindly on my arm, "I am going to give you a proof of my complete confidence in your honour and trustworthiness. I have the reputation of being a rich man. If I were, I should like nothing better than to make you young people happy. Well, here is my last balance-sheet, which no other eye but mine has yet seen. Look it over and judge for yourself."

To this I demurred. Mr. Bradford's balance-sheet was nothing to the affection which existed between Maude and myself. If he were not so rich as people thought, then all the better, as far as I was concerned, for there would be less inequality between us. Still Mr. Bradford urged me to read the document before me. Say that he wanted my advice as an expert. Well, on this ground, I could not refuse to glance at his schedule.

At first sight, the document seemed of

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a highly satisfactory character. It struck me that the item of cash in hand and at call was rather small, considering the amount of liabilities. But with an institution that enjoyed the solid credit of Bradford's old bank, perhaps it was not necessary to keep a large reserve of coin. Anyhow, there was a comfortable balance in Mr. Bradford's favour of about a hundred thousand pounds. But a rapid glance at the assets that made up the satisfactory balance, suggested certain misgivings: "Freehold and leasehold properties, valued at £70,000. Reversionary interests, estimated at £30,000."

"Will it do, Frank?" asked Mr. Bradford, with a keen glance at my face.

The only objection I could make was, that perhaps too much capital was locked up in the above items.

"You have hit the blot," Frank, said Mr. Bradford, smiling grimly. "The seventy thousand pounds is represented by a mortgage on the Thunderstone Collieries, in the county of Derby—that is, by some waste land, rusty machinery, and a couple of shafts half-full of water. The thirty thousand pounds' worth of reversions consists of sundry insurance policies for that amount, on the life of the former proprietor of the Thunderstone mines. This last asset is an expensive one, as it costs me a thousand a year to keep up the policies. You ask me, perhaps," said Mr. Bradford, warmly, "how I could have been mad enough to make such advances upon worthless securities? I reply, that I was deceived by one in whom I placed implicit reliance—just as I am placing implicit reliance upon you, Frank—and that man was your father. He it was who robbed me of my money, and left me with this fearful burden on my shoulders."

"And where is he now?" I asked, in a voice full of bitterness against the man who had brought sorrow and destruction upon all about him.

"That I don't know," replied Mr. Bradford. "The insurance offices pay him a small annuity just to keep him alive, and to have evidence of his existence. I have heard that he acts as croupier in a gaming house."

"You see, Frank," continued Mr. Bradford, in compassionate tones, "there is only one chance for us—I may get a rich partner. The business of the bank is sound and profitable, my credit is unimpaired; but at the first shock, or crisis, down we go. Well, I have got a chance. John Barraclough, who is worth, you know, half a million, has suggested my taking his son Henry as a partner. Henry is much attached to Maude, and I should have said, before this affair of yours, that Maude was decidedly well-disposed to him. Well, if this match can be arranged, Henry will bring in a capital of fifty thousand pounds, and the old bank will be put beyond the reach of danger. We won't forget you either, Frank. After a time you shall be brought in as a junior partner."

But this was a little too much to bear. I must give up my darling, that was inevitable; but to be asked to sell her—to renounce her love for so many pounds a year—this was beyond endurance.

"Whatever my father may have been," I said, hotly, "I am a man of honour. I no longer ask you for your daughter; but I can't stay here to see her sold to another, and share in the profits of the sale. As soon as you can replace me, I will leave the bank, and seek my fortune elsewhere."

Mr. Bradford shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if that is how you choose to take it, Frank, there is nothing more to be said. But you must not speak to Maude in your present excited state. I will make your excuses, and after a night's rest you will, perhaps, see the matter in a more reasonable light."

And he rang the bell in a dignified way to order a dogcart to take me home. But I preferred to walk, and left the house at once, finding the mizzling rain and dark, murky way in sufficient harmony with my present feelings.

Presently appeared the lights of Market Mellish gleaming over the bare hedgerows, and before long I found myself in the high-street of that little town.

In the centre of the high-street stood the old bank, a warm, cheerful, red brick house of considerable size, which Mr. Bradford had occupied himself, in his younger days. Here I had been allotted, by the kindness of Mr. Bradford, a couple of handsome rooms; while the rest of the house was occupied by our head clerk, Absolon, who was charged with the safety of the premises. Mrs. Absolon looked after my domestic comforts. She was a bright, bustling little woman, and generally brought an atmosphere of cheerfulness about with her. But this night, as she came into my room, where I sat brooding over the fire, she looked quite serious.

"Oh, Mr. Frank," she began, "I had such an upset this afternoon. It was just

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about dusk, and I saw a gentleman walking on the other side of the street, and he looked up at the windows; but, dear me!" she cried, noticing my woebegone expression, "have you seen him, too?"

"Seen whom?" I cried, with an attempt at my usual manner. "I have seen fifty, more or less, and if you were at the window, Mrs. Absolon, I don't wonder at anybody looking up at it."

"Now, none of your nonsense, Mr. Frank. This is a serious business. It was your father, I am sure—poor Colonel Forester. And he didn't look much older either, and just as beautifully dressed as he used to be, with a flower in his buttonhole, and all! Oh, he was a charming man, your papa, Mr. Frank; but still the seeing him unexpected like gave me quite a shock. And I have been expecting all the evening to hear his knock at the door!"

Just at this moment a sharp double knock resounded through the house, and Mrs. Absolon gave a little scream of terror. But the knock only announced a telegram after all, which I opened according to standing orders. It was an American cablegram, and bore the succinct message: "Dead certainty, proofs by mail." I sent off the message to the Grange. This little event had roused me, and I began energetically to make preparations for departure, while Mrs. Absolon looked on amazed as I gave her hurried instructions about this and that. "Now, mind, I must have all my things home by Saturday, and send round and tell young Blake he can have Chancellor for seventy guineas. And the dogs; yes, I must find a home for the dogs."

Mrs. Absolon's amazement gave place to indignation.

"Home for the dogs!" she cried. "Why, they've got a home, and it would break my heart to part with the dear creatures. And, as for selling Chancellor, you shan't do it, Mr. Frank. Where will you get another horse as will suit you so well? I see how it is. You have had a tiff with the old gentleman, and it's to be havoc and ruin everywhere. But you wait; to-morrow will tell a different tale. And I shan't send word to the laundress about your things neither, Mr. Frank. And just as your father has come home with his fortune made, and everybody's to be happy and comfortable."

The good woman's last words struck me, with a thought that such a thing was just within the bounds of possibility. But it was utterly unlikely; and Mrs. Absolon had been deceived, no doubt, by some point of fancied resemblance. Anyhow, I did not slacken in my preparations for departure. Not another night would I sleep in the house, which would doubtless soon be occupied by Maude and her future husband. And, when morning came, I was ready for a start, but in what direction I had not made up my mind. But I went round the old place, took an affectionate leave of Chancellor and the dogs, and then found my way to the old churchyard, which sloped so pleasantly down to the winding valley, to pay a last visit to my mother's grave. Strange to say, the wet turf already, early as it was, bore marks of fresh footsteps—somebody had left a little bunch of flowers there, on the flat stone slab—white, exotic flowers.

But all this was driven out of my head when I reached the bank-house. A carriage from the Grange was standing at the door, and Mrs. Absolon was looking out for me with a triumphant expression.

"There's somebody waiting to see you upstairs, Mr. Frank." And as I darted up two steps at a time, she called out: "What about Chancellor and the dogs, Mr. Frank, have you found a home for them yet?"

And on the threshold of my sitting-room stood Maude, blushing, radiant; and, as I clasped her in my arms, she whispered:

"It is all right, Frank. You are to forget what papa said last night. He has sent me to make his peace with you, and bring you home to breakfast."

Ah, what a happy morning that was after our night of misery! For Maude had been as wretched as myself. When I had gone away, without a word to her, she had been in the depths of desolation, and her father's manner, gloomy and morose, had convinced her that there was no more hope for us. But in the morning all was different. Happiness had come in sleep, although she had hardly slept a wink. Some good news had changed her father's disposition.

Happy! how could we be otherwise, with our own hearts' desire, and all the charm and enchantment of love's young dream? Yet, through it all there sounded a note of doubt and dread; in my ears, at least, for Mr. Bradford's revelations had shown me how thin was the crust on which we were standing. And presently I was told the news which had changed Mr. Bradford's views so suddenly. He had kept it back from me at first, for it was

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not news at which I ought properly to rejoice. But the American telegram was from an agent he had employed to ascertain with certainty what had become of my father, and by the news of his death Mr. Bradford would be the richer by thirty thousand pounds, as well as relieved from the burdensome yearly payments. The thousand a year he thus saved he would give to his son-in-law and daughter, and, with replenished coffers, the bank would enter upon a career of increased prosperity. But the proofs were the thing, the proofs of the identity of the deceased, which, when they arrived, did not prove thoroughly convincing, somehow, to the representatives of the Insurance Companies. Further evidence was called for, and this caused delay and anxiety.

But there seemed to be no reason why the wedding should be postponed. Mr. Bradford, having once given his consent, was anxious that the affair should be quickly concluded. Marriages in May everybody knew to be unlucky, and why should people marry in May when they might marry in April? So for an early day in April the wedding was fixed.

As a preliminary, a partnership deed was signed by Bradford and myself, and, from that moment, my anxieties became most poignant. There was a grand dinner party at the Grange, followed by a ball, to celebrate the event and in honour of the approaching wedding. All the best people of the county were there, and nearly all the chief magnates were condescending enough to congratulate me, and to assure me that the confidence, so long reposed in the old bank, would be strengthened and confirmed by my accession to the firm. But there was one conspicuous absentee, and that was Mr. John Barraclough, who had intended his son to marry Maude, and settle down to business. Still, he had taken Mr. Bradford's excuses very well, and had promised that the little misunderstanding should not affect in any way their business relations. For all that, I fancied that our friend was a vindictive kind of man and would do us an ill turn if he could.

And, although I tried my utmost to be as gay and jubilant as beseemed my position, I could not help seeing the skeleton that sat with us at the banquet and waltzed in and out among the dancers, or realising how the people, who now showed us so much consideration, might, in a few weeks' time, be reproaching us as rogues and vagabonds.

Quickly enough followed our wedding-day and the honeymoon in Paris, which, bright and happy as it was, still was for me overshadowed by suspense and anxiety. We had constant news from home, and all of a cheering, pleasant character. But the Insurance Companies had not settled, and a private letter from Absolon conveyed the somewhat disquieting report that an agent of the Companies' had been in the town making enquiries as to a rumour that had somehow got about, that my father had recently been seen very much alive and in perfect health in his native place.

"But it all turned out baseless," added Absolon, "and if they don't soon pay up we will make them."

In the same hotel with us were staying another newly-married couple, whose goings and comings excited much more attention than ours. The newspapers recorded their movements with ornamental flourishes, visitors arrived blocking the courtyard with their carriages; journalists came to interview Colonel Woodward, the renowned American financier and millionaire; the costume and appearance of the charming American bride was the subject of constant comment. An accidental meeting in the lobby of a theatre revealed the fact that Maude and Mrs. Woodward had been schoolfellows for a short time in England, and a strong and sentimental friendship sprang up between the two young women. The American was a pretty, lively, amusing creature, and an excellent companion for Maude, who went about with her everywhere. The Colonel himself was rarely in their company. Maude described him as grave and grey, but very well got up for an elderly man. The Colonel and I had exchanged formal visits, but we had never met. I fancied that he avoided me; but there was no particular reason why we should seek each other's society, and he was generally occupied all day long in receiving official and financial people.

Whenever I returned to our hotel, after the shortest absence, I was sure to make particular enquiries as to letters and telegrams, always dreading some bad news. But my partner continued to write in excellent spirits—"One or two good accounts had been opened. The crops were looking well, and there was every prospect of a good year." But, one afternoon, a telegram awaited me: "Return home, business complications feared." I felt that the very worst must have happened; complications meant ruin. We must leave by the train

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from Paris that evening. My wife, I was told, was in the apartments of Mrs. Woodward. I ran to seek her and bid her prepare for immediate departure. The Colonel's servant admitted me. He was sure the two ladies would return in a few minutes. I sat down in the gaily-decorated salon to await their arrival, and, to pass the time, took up a book of photographs. There was the Colonel's bride, in every variety of pose and costume; there was the Colonel's yacht; there were the Colonel's famous trotting-horses; but where was the Colonel himself? Why, here, in proud humility, at the very end of the volume; the Colonel himself, with his shrewd, enquiring, watchful air; and again, as if to show his wife what a handsome young fellow he had been, the same Colonel—he must have been only a lieutenant then—with curled ambrosial whiskers. But what was it that struck me all of a heap, as I examined this last portrait? Why, the conviction that it was perfectly familiar to me; that it was the facsimile of the miniature, mounted in a locket, which my mother had given me on her death-bed, and which I always carried with me.

I tore the photograph from the book and took it to the window to compare the two more fully. As I did so I heard a slight noise behind me, and there stood the Colonel, watching my proceedings with a strange look on his face. As I turned, he drew a revolver from his pocket and covered me with it.

"Put up your hands, you scoundrel!"

"You are mistaken, Colonel Forester," I rejoined, with as much calmness as I was master of, with that ugly weapon turned full upon me. "I am not a thief. If you kill me it will be murder; and you have guilt enough upon your soul without that."

"What in thunder do you mean?" exclaimed the Colonel, dropping the muzzle of his weapon, but keeping his finger on the trigger.

"Do you deny that you are the original of this portrait; that you are Colonel Forester?"

"If you know that you know too much," he cried, and fired upon me at once.

But the shot was fired an inch or two too high, and just cut off a lock of hair, without injuring the scalp. Next minute I had closed with him, and tried to wrest the pistol from his grasp. In the struggle, our worst passions were aroused. I wrested the pistol from his grasp, and was about to strike him with the butt-end of it on the head, when, to my excited vision, a hand appeared to be stretched between us—a shadowy hand—but one that I recognised as my mother's. I flung the pistol to the other end of the room.

"Forgive me," I said, loosening my grasp. "I forgot my promise to her."

The Colonel sank back upon a couch, looking white and scared.

"What, are you her son and mine! Are you Frank Forester? Well, I own up. I have been a scoundrel, perhaps, but not quite so bad as you would make me out. If I seemed to desert her, it was because I had sunk too low to hope to claim her. And when fortune turned, it was too late. And now I am started in a new existence, and I don't want to be haunted by the ghosts of the past."

"That was all very well," I replied; but he must do justice to the man he had plundered, whose ruin was now imminent, and would involve his daughter and son-in-law in the same evil fate.

The Colonel sat and pondered. At last he said:

"Look here, Frank, chuck in those life-policies, and that thundering mine, that old Bradford ought to have made something of, and I'll give you a bill for a hundred thousand pounds, which is about what I lifted from your father-in-law. Now sit down, and make out your contract note, and, as time presses, I'll write a bill for the dollars. And after that we go our ways, and know each other no more."

Just as the Colonel had handed me this bill, and I had given him an undertaking to transfer the Thunderstone Collieries and sundry policies of assurance to his possession, Maude and Mrs. Woodward appeared in the doorway.

"Your husband and me's been having a deal," said the Colonel, shaking hands. "Sorry to lose you so soon. My dear, you'll have to take leave of your friend. Sorry to lose you; but we'll meet again, in the old country, perhaps."

We have not met yet. But the bill was all right. I got Rothschilds to endorse it to their London house, and away we went for home as fast as train and steamer could carry us. At Dover we were met by a special messenger from the bank, with a confidential despatch, enjoining me to see our London agents and use the most powerful representations to get them to honour our bills now falling due.

It was John Barraclough who had made all the mischief, and Bradford added that

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if assistance were not forthcoming before morning, the bank would not open its doors.

But, as things turned out, I walked into Messrs. Whatman and Wilkins's, in Lombard Street, our agents, with a jolly, assured air, left a handsome cover for all forthcoming bills, and then away for home, with Maude by my side, and, as a footstool, a bag filled with gold and Bank of England notes.

Already the telegraph had put dear old Bradford's mind at ease; and the old bank opened its doors next morning without anybody knowing how near it had been to a total collapse.

We never discovered, by the way, who it was who so closely resembled the Colonel, that his death was so nearly accepted as that of his double. But it certainly was my father who had visited our town and left the bunch of flowers on my mother's grave. And I believe that the little gift was remembered in his favour when he stood in peril of his life at the hands of his son.

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER VIII. UNDER SENTENCE.

WITH the death of the victim of Rebecca's sudden and unreasoning anger, a complete change came over the mental attitude of Louis Draycott. It was not that he for a moment forgot the sorrow and the blight that had fallen upon his own hopes, his own dreams of "a day to be," that now should never be; but a new set of impulses and anxieties came to the front. That strange element in the tie of marriage, undefinable yet all powerful—that fealty which overrides all sense of wrong or even of outrage—was changing the current of the man's thoughts and feelings, filling his days with care, his nights with dread.

True, the woman he married had not been loved by Louis Draycott with the absorbing passion that came after; but she had been part of his life; she had lain in his bosom, and walked by his side. He had prayed over her sins and her backslidings; had hoped against hope; had despaired, hoped again, again grown desperate. But, however things had been between them, the thread of her life had been interwoven with his; and, as the wife who has been outraged and made miserable by a husband's sins, yet when the man lies dead before her, sees only the lover of her youth, the father of her children in that still, recumbent form that can never wound or hurt her any more; as she forgets all the black hiatus that lies between her bridal joy and the day of her widowhood; so Louis Draycott forgot the wrong, and the shame, and the misery, only remembering that this woman had been his wife; nay, was his wife, and that he must use every power he possessed, and strain every energy, to save her from a terrible fate.

That she stood, a fatal barrier, between himself and the woman he loved with every fibre of his being he had known from the beginning; but yet it was a strange fact that this aspect of her life and of her possible death had grown so dim to him since he knew that she was menaced by a horrible danger, as to count for nothing with him; and, stranger still, perhaps, with Mazie.

Watching the two, in this most dreadful crisis of their lives, Aunt Dacie was often touched, even to tears, by the absolute selflessness of both, often struck with Mazie's marvellous likeness to that dear Lucille, whose single-minded earnestness had been so striking, whose powers of devotion and endurance so proven by the way in which she met all the trials and triumphs, the joys and sorrows of her life.

The spirit of the mother seemed to have descended upon the child. As unselfish, as strong—even in weakness—as tender, as helpful, was Mazie now. Not that she, any more than Louis, forgot; not that the black cloud of the parting that must be, did not sometimes loom so darkly in her eyes, that she was fain to cover them from the sight; but, for the moment, the thought of, and fear for, Rebecca dwarfed all else.

Her thoughts returned again and again, dwelling long and closely on that strange interview in the prison, when the hard heart had softened to her, the hard eyes moistened to a tear.

Each word, each look, each smallest incident of that strange interview had Mazie told to Louis Draycott, he listening not without amaze, nor yet without thankfulness. Maybe he would have hesitated, had Mazie asked his permission to seek out this woman who could never more be wife of his, and yet who must for ever come between his fair, sweet love and him. But he read the heart of his darling, and knew with what noble intent the

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task from which many a woman would have shrunk, had been undertaken; had recognised, too, how the effort had been blessed; how the bitterness in Mazie's sorrow had been done away; and how Rebecca had been redeemed by the touch of the "live coal" from off the altar of a glowing human heart.

She had told him, even weeping, of the girl's visit; of her gentleness, her tenderness, her pleadings. She had spoken of the past with penitence, and of all the ill she had wrought her husband with remorse; and then, with a quaint-enough rebound into the old abrupt modes of expression, said to him: "I'm sorry—I've—turned up again. She's a good sort; she was very good to me. I tell you I'm sorry I've turned up again to baulk her." After this she huddled herself together in the old sullen fashion, nor could they get her to speak again that day.

But the fit passed, and she took to longing for the comings of the Chaplain, as the sick long for the dawn after the darkness and weariness of the night. She had jeered and gibed at him about the possibility of her life paying forfeit for her crime, had twitted him with villainous suggestions of his own possible satisfaction in seeing the obstacle to his union with Mazie thus set aside; but now her mocking was hushed, her hard spirit humbled; her constant cry:

"I did not mean to kill her; the knife lay on the table handy, or I should never have done it. She laughed when I said I was a lady once, and I wanted to punish her; but I didn't mean to kill her. I'm sorry she's dead. She had a child, had 'Liza; and it used to cry for her all the time when she was out. It will have to cry loud to wake her now. I'm sorry she's dead. I tell you I didn't mean to kill her."

The other prisoners got tired enough of hearing this miserable litany chanted incessantly. As for the Chaplain, it rang in his ears night and day.

"We can do nothing," he said to Mazie, "until the coroner's jury have given a verdict. They will sit to-morrow."

It was a time of terrible strain and tension. What would he have done without Mazie—without the love that never failed him, the hand that clasped his so tenderly, the lips that uttered such brave words of counsel and of courage?

Even in the midst of such sorrow and anxiety as pressed upon him now, there were moments in which her exceeding preciousness came cruelly home to him, forcing from him a lament over the tearing asunder that must come.

Once he framed her sweet face in both his hands, looking down into the fond and faithful eyes until his own grew blind with tears.

"Little woman," he said, with a long indrawn breath that told of the tumult in his breast, "little woman, how I shall think of you and long for you in the days when you shall be set far from me!"

And what answer could Mazie give to such a plaint as that, save her tears?

But these outbursts were rare during this time of waiting. The one absorbing event in each day to Louis Draycott was his visit to the prison-cell where Rebecca dreed her weary weird. The time would come when the pain of parting with the woman he loved would bear down all before it; but that time was not yet. The mere fact that a soul in sorrow looked to him for comfort, that one of God's creatures in deadly fear turned to him for strength and consolation, was sufficient to close the avenues of feeling in other directions, to deaden and dull the pain of personal suffering, as in hospital practice they say that one pain "masks" another. The pain is still there, but it is not felt so acutely, because another and newer form of suffering thrusts it into abeyance for the time being.

And Rebecca was indeed in these days, as Miss Johnstone the warder put it, "a handful." One hour she would be elated with utterly groundless hope; the next "floored," as she herself expressed it, so that uneasy and perpetual watch was kept through the spy-hole, lest she should try to do herself a mischief; at nights she would wail until the prisoners near at hand took to knocking on their doors, by way of intimating that they couldn't stand the din any longer. Now she would make wonderful resolutions as to what she would do if she "got clear." Now she would call up the most ghastly details of her possible execution, and implore the Chaplain to "stand by her to the last." One day she would be so sullen no one could get a word out of her; the next she would for ever mutter like a person in delirium—scaring the Matron by telling her how, in the middle of the night, a flood of light, "like heaven," had flashed into the cell, and how, from the midst of the blinding radiance, "the lady's" face had looked at her, "the lady's" hand had beckoned to her. In a word, haunted by all the morbid

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and hysterical ideas to which a mind, weakened by excess of any kind, is ever a prey, she may truly have been said to be "all things by turns and nothing long." Her condition was pitiable indeed.

If, as Michelet tells us, "the truest priest is the man who has seen, learned, and suffered much, and who has at last found in his own heart the gentle words needed for the comfort and healing of others," then may Louis Draycott well have been looked upon as the fittest man to deal with such a case as hers. His patience never failed; his tenderness knew no "shadow of turning."

She grew to listen for the sound of his footstep, as the faithful dog listens for the step of his master, hushing her moaning and her muttering as the hour drew near that would bring him; sitting still as a statue, with her eyes fixed upon the door, her hands wrung the one in the other in an agony of impatience.

They used to look at her through the disc, marvelling to each other upon her strange demeanour, even somehow getting over their dislike and aversion, and now and again showing little acts of kindness towards her which, in her present mood, she was quick enough to recognise and be grateful for.

But we are letting the clock run on too fast, for this state of things came about after Rebecca knew that 'Liza was dead.

It was the Chaplain himself who told her when the news came to the prison. It was his firm and gentle hands that held her as she cried aloud, trying to dash herself against the walls of the cell; his voice that calmed her, at last, after long striving. He spared himself in nothing; he had no thought for himself; but those who looked on saw the havoc the long strain was making with health and strength; noted the sharpening of each feature; the haggard eyes that looked as though the healing hand of sleep was never laid across them; noted the change in the resonant, bell-like voice that had once rung so clear and sweet through the dreary prison chapel.

"The Chaplain speaks as if he was tired-like," said George, with a portentous shake of the head. "He's not the man he was, isn't the Chaplain, and that there she-varmint's the bottom of it all."

"But, George," said more tender-hearted Bessy, "she can't help being alive, you know."

"Well, I don't know," replied the gatekeeper, "I hold to people sayin' of a thing and stickin' to it. Yo' see, Mrs. Mogeridge, she said she wur dead, and she'd oughter have stuck to it—there's nothin' like being in one tale. I've no patience wi' folk as don't know their own minds, and don't rightly know if they're living or dead. I've no patience wi' 'Becca, as yo' call her."

"No, I know you haven't," said Bessy, gently; "but I think you would have, if you could see her—she's that sad and sorry-like, it 'ud go to your heart, I know."

"No 'twouldn't; my heart bean't so easy got at as all that; not but what it's a tender enough heart when you do get at it," he added, with an uneasy glance at Bessy; "and no one knows better what it's made of than that young rascal of yours, Mrs. Mogeridge. He makes a reg'lar fool o' me, does Bobby, same as he does o' Joseph Stubbs—strokin' his back t' wrong way 'oop, and takin' all manner o' freedom wi' 'im."

"You're very good to Bobby, George, I know," said Bobby's mother, smiling, as she went her way.

George watched her down the corridor, until she turned the corner. Then he went into the gate-house, and sat down in the high-backed chair by the fireplace. George was full of thought, and took no heed of Joseph Stubbs, who put himself alarmingly out of the perpendicular, the better to rub his back up against his master's legs.

"I wish father were here to gi' me a bit of his mind on't," he muttered, presently; then, with all an artist's pride in his work, he looked round the walls of the little room. "One would think them picters might do a lot towards makin' a woman take a fancy to a place—so one would—let alone the man as put 'em there. It warn't an easy job, and had to have a lot o' mind put into it, as father could say if he wur' here. I don't mean to be proud, but I'm of a mind to think there's not a-many could have fitted 'em in so neat and so suitable. A man must have gifts as could wrostle wi' a job like that. The thing is, to make other folk see a man's gifts in the proper light."

George was not the only one who mourned over the change in the Chaplain. From the Governor himself to a certain little wizened tailor—who, by dint of careful conduct, had won the privilege of cleaning out the cells, and doing other active work about the prison—there was but one feeling among all classes: a deep sorrow for the man who had made himself the main-

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spring of all that was good, sympathetic, and helpful within those gloomy walls. It had been bad enough news to learn that the Chaplain was going to leave them, that he was bound for an African mission. But it was worse to see him fade and change like this.

"Happen he'll go on a longer journey than to that place we've heerd tell on, if things goes on like this," said the wizened little "cleaner," and though the warders told him to hold his tongue, and "shut up sharp," they exchanged significant looks behind his back, as who should say:

"Even that shrimp may speak the truth sometimes, mind you."

As for the man round whom all this interest and all these fears centred, it was small thought, indeed, if any, that he gave to himself. If now and again a sense of exhaustion came upon him, he fought it off by sheer force of will; and Mazie hardly realised how cruelly the daily and hourly tension was telling upon him, for in her presence he was strengthened. The touch of her hand had magic for him; face to face with the sweetness of her tenderness, he forgot to be weary.

Perhaps he had never himself realised how worn and haggard he had grown to look until the night before the inquest; when, passing by a mirror in the street, he caught sight of his own full-length figure. The dragging step, the stooping shoulders, the tired, white face, struck him strangely.

He made his way home, forgot to take any food, sat for awhile absorbed in thought of the tremendous issues of the day to come, lay down, dressed as he was, upon his bed, and almost in a moment passed into that hazy land that is neither sleep nor waking, yet partakes of both, and is the outcome of utter exhaustion both of mind and body.

Dream follows dream, phantasies of the past rise up before him in torturing distinctness.

Now he is an undergraduate again. It is early morning, and in the stately calm of Merton Chapel he listens to the voice of praise and prayer. The old days come back so vividly that the very train of thought that used to seethe and bubble in his mind then, is reproduced now; the old tumult of thought in which this "party" in the Church or that, seemed to appeal to his sympathies, chime in with his convictions, and claim his adherence; the old longing for a wider leading out beyond and above them all—the old yearning to be led to see that the earth was the Lord's, and not the devil's, that God was a loving Father, not a cruel taskmaster.

Freshness of anticipation, a young heart's elastic spirit of hope, these made life seem fair to look upon, in spite of the puzzles that met him in it here and there.

How it all came back to him!—the deep amber glow through the east window; the young heads bowed; the twittering of the birds in the quad outside; a sentence from the prayer used on Commemoration Days, "Be not sorry as men that have no hope."

Now, in his fancy, he is waiting in Aunt Dacie's parlour—waiting in "the heart of the house" for the heart of his life to come to him. A few moments more and she will be there, close beside him, nestling to his heart, his arms about her; her lips will touch his, and cling there as the joy of meeting thrills him through and through. She is coming; she is singing as she comes.

But why does she not come? Even the echo of her voice is dying away—the little room grows dark; he gropes and stumbles, and wakes cold and trembling, to find a warder standing by his bed, to realise that he has lain there through the night and on into the morning, and that the inquest will begin in little more than an hour.

"You was so heavy like, I didn't like to wake you, sir," says the man, speaking gently, and with all the pity and tenderness rough men will show at such times. "I've been in twice before; and, please sir, the Matron has your coffee ready, and I was to say you'd got some way to go; and would you be pleased, sir, to come and see the — the female prisoner, sir, before you start? She's been raving-like all night, and crying out as she heard the girl 'Liza's child crying all the time, so as naught could still it. I'm sorry, sir, to have to trouble you like this; but that's the message as they sent."

Less than two hours later, Louis Draycott was standing in the blinding sunshine, grasping Dumphie's arm, and staggering like a drunken man, while the crowd which had gathered round the door of the place where the inquest had been held, fell back to give him air.

The Coroner's jury had returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against Rebecca Fordyce Draycott.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 29.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XIII. THE FANCY FAIR.

ONE day towards the end of August, the Rectory gardens were devoted to the purpose of raising funds for the church, and transformed into a kind of open-air bazaar, with a military band, flags, Chinese lanterns, and, above and beyond all, a money-taker at the gate.

So many of those who came to the fête were personal friends of Mrs. Butterworth, that it was her custom to receive them just as if they were there by ordinary invitation. The Rector's wife was a confirmed invalid, unable to go even so far as her beloved garden without the aid of a Bath-chair.

The band was discoursing lively music; the stall-keepers were driving a brisk trade; Mr. Litton was noisily inviting all and sundry to try their luck at a wheel of fortune, when, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, a shock ran through the gay throng, in consequence of the appearance on the scene of Mrs. Oliver.

She had a right to pay her half-crown and to come to the fête like the grandest or the humblest person in Middleton; nevertheless, her presence was regarded as an innovation; whilst that she should arrive under the escort of Clement Northcott—another black sheep—was nothing less than indecent. If the slightest fault could have been found with her appearance there might have been some consolation; but, in less than five minutes, the stalls were deserted by their patrons, and Mrs. Oliver may be said to have won the day.

"Thank you so much for coming, Clement," said Mrs. Butterworth, "and especially for bringing Mrs. Oliver with you. What a truant you have been. Here, Maggie," she added, beckoning to Brownie, "just take Clement away and scold him well for neglecting his oldest friends."

"You are taking me away from all the fun," exclaimed Brownie, as Clement led her to a secluded part of the gardens.

"You would not surely administer my castigation in public, Brownie."

"I do really think you deserve one," she replied. "The idea of coming with Mrs. Oliver! You know that we can't afford to set people's opinion at defiance in this way, Clement."

"Never mind," he said gently; "it seems almost like old times again to be here with you. Let us forget everything but the present. Can't we pretend to be children, and play at happiness just for one half-hour?"

Brownie's vexation disappeared as she listened to Clement; but at that moment she espied Mr. Litton.

"There is Uncle Walter," she said. "I particularly want to speak to him. I have been trying to induce him to play at tennis with me ever since he left his sling off. He never will play at home; but he seems unusually amiable to-day. Perhaps it is Mrs. Oliver's influence. I don't want you to come, please," and, with a nod to Clement, she approached Mr. Litton, soon overcame his objection, and led him away captive.

Now, Brownie had always declared that she cultivated the uncle for the sake of the nephew. But it puzzled Clement to see how his interests were to be served by this particular game of tennis. When,

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however, he saw Anderson waiting at the court—it was necessary to pay for playing to-day—he told himself that it had been a prearranged scheme. All Clement's good spirits forsook him when he observed that Brownie's eyes only left Mr. Litton's racquet to exchange glances of intelligence with the doctor.

Later in the afternoon, Clement was standing beside Mrs. Oliver, watching a group which included Maud and his cousin, when he saw Anderson bearing down upon it. Suddenly Henry Grayson darted forward and secured Brownie, after which Anderson and Maud strolled away together in another direction.

"What a cheerful companion you are to-day, Clement," said Mrs. Oliver. "Now there is Mr. Litton. He is always capital fun—never without a host of amusing stories to tell one."

"Lies are more in his way," growled Clement, conscious that everything was going amiss with him, and beginning to wish he had not come to the fête.

"Fie for shame! Besides, what do I care? I never expect anything but deception from a man. What fools you must think we all are, Clement—we poor, trustful women! By-the-bye, did I ever tell you that Captain Oliver recognised an old acquaintance in Mr. Litton?"

"You did not tell me. I heard it from my cousin."

"Indeed! Then Mr. Litton must have told her himself. Humph, I wonder at that. Those two men are so uncommonly mysterious as a rule. Still, I do like Mr. Litton. Now, Clement, I want to get rid of you. I came here to be cheerful and enjoy myself, you know."

And, thus dismissed, he sauntered moodily off by himself.

"How delightfully cool that little shrubbery looks," said Anderson to Maud, as they turned their backs to the crowd; "you have everything you can wish for in this old garden. I don't wonder that Mrs. Butterworth loves it."

"I thought there was always something wanting," answered Maud, remembering how Henry Grayson had seemed to forestall her companion with Brownie. "Man never is, but always to be blest, you know."

"And of course Pope is infallible. But really, Miss Northcott, I think man is blest here; why, it is a perfect Eden."

"Did our first parents play at tennis, Mr. Anderson?" she enquired, laughingly.

"Well, they had not been in existence long before they made a racquet," said he. "Shall we seek the shade, Miss Northcott?"

"The sun is going down; shade will soon come to us of its own accord," she answered; and, before he could urge his wishes, they saw the Rector shuffling towards them in his usual methodical manner.

"What is this that Spearing has just been telling me, Anderson?" asked Mr. Butterworth. "Surely you have not already decided to wash your hands of the Eye Hospital?"

"I have not actually declined the post as yet," was the answer, "but I seriously think of doing so;" and they walked together towards the house. But Maud found an opportunity of speaking to the Rector alone, before she went away.

"I thought it was a settled thing that Mr. Anderson should go to the hospital," she said.

"You see, Maud, the office is honorary; it may lead to something better eventually, but for the present, and for some time to come, it means a lot of work and no pay."

"But," she persisted, "it is exactly the work Mr. Anderson prefers. He has often told us so. And everybody says he will have nothing to do when once Dr. Stanhope gets well again."

"Well, well, there are his parish duties. Poor Anderson was terribly bitten over his practice. I rather think if he does not go to the Eye Hospital, he will look out for a post elsewhere. I am afraid so. What we want, Maud, is some benevolent person who will come down with a handsome cheque, to endow a fund for a surgeon's salary."

"I suppose it would take a lot of money to do that, Mr. Butterworth," said Maud, with a considerable amount of hesitation.

"Five thousand pounds might suffice," answered the Rector. "It would be a good thing for the town, and for Anderson, too. However, it is no good wishing, and there is not much time to lose; the surgeon must be appointed before the hospital is opened."

By this time many of the visitors were leaving the gardens to make room for those who would be admitted at a reduced price in the evening. Mrs. Butterworth lay wearily back in her chair, and many of those who knew her best went away without troubling her with leave-taking.

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"Clement," she said, as he lingered by her side in the hope of a word with Brownie before she went home, "will you come to see me soon? I want to say a few words to you. They tell me those naughty girls have gone without coming to me — just like them! Good-bye, Clement, you will not forget."

Strolling to the gate, he saw Mr. Litton assisting Mrs. Oliver to her carriage.

"You may come if you like," she said; and, with great alacrity, Mr. Litton took a seat by her side. "How gloomy poor Clement does look!" she murmured, half to herself.

"Poor devil! jealous of me, Belle," was his answer.

"Please don't speak to me like that again," said Mrs. Oliver. "You must not take liberties. And pray don't flatter yourself that Clement could ever be jealous of you."

"Perhaps you wish he could be," Mr. Litton retorted.

"Never mind what I wish. He is not, and that is all that need concern you."

But she soon regained her good-humour, and Mr. Litton did not return to Eastwood until close upon midnight.

At breakfast the next morning, Brownie's usually bright face was cloudy, while she betrayed unmistakeable symptoms of having passed a sleepless night. Maud, on the contrary, was overflowing with happiness.

"Well, Brownie, what is the matter?" she enquired, as soon as they were alone. "You don't look as though you had brought away very pleasant recollections from the fête."

"Pleasant!" was the emphatic answer; "the whole thing was hateful. I never spent so wretched an afternoon in my life —never. Everything would go wrong with me."

Maud, whose conscience was a tender one, began to accuse herself of having been in some measure the cause of Brownie's vexation.

"Tell me all about it," she coaxed, stealing her arm round her cousin's waist.

"Oh, Maudie, things will persist in going just as I don't want them to go," she exclaimed, overcome by this unusual display of tenderness. "And, Maud— Henry Grayson——"

She pressed her head against her cousin's breast, leaving the sentence uncompleted. But Maud perfectly understood.

"And how did you answer him, Brownie?"

Brownie raised her head and looked at Maud with unmistakeable reproach:

"How could I answer him, Maud? The worst of it is he will not take a refusal. I never knew any one quite so obstinate as Henry. He would not listen to 'no;' but I meant it, all the same."

And now Brownie felt her cousin's arm withdrawn; and Maud walked to the window, where she stood for some time looking out on to the garden, whilst the silence remained unbroken. Presently, without turning her head, and in a forced kind of voice, Maud asked:

"Is there no hope whatever for Henry Grayson, Brownie?"

"Oh no, Maud;" and still there was a suspicion of reproach in her voice.

Another period of silence; then suddenly coming from the window, and placing her hands gently on Brownie's shoulders, Maud looked straight into her eyes.

"Brownie, tell me, darling girl; is there—is there some one else, dear?"

Maud's manner was as earnest as her cousin's, and Brownie let her eyes fall beneath the enquiring gaze which met them. Her reply was a silent one. Throwing her arms round Maud's neck, she again buried her face on her breast, whilst Maud passed her hand fondly over the brown head, trying valiantly to restrain her own bitter tears.

"Don't fret, Brownie," she said. "I am sorry for—for Henry. But we can't always like just those who like us, can we, dear? Only be patient and true, darling, and you will find it all come right, even yet."

"It never will come right. No, no, it never can come right," cried Brownie.

"Yes, yes," said Maud, in her tranquil, soothing tones, "you are excited, and the difficulties appear greater than they really are. You must not expect everything to go smoothly all at once. Of course there is the one great difficulty; or, at least, it will seem to be a difficulty to mother, if it is not one to you. But time will see that and every other obstacle disappear, Brownie. We will make them disappear."

Under the influence of this tender sympathy Brownie dried her eyes and became more hopeful.

But although it was a long time before this subject was referred to again, from that day Maud was an altered woman.

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Putting aside all thoughts of self, she began to scheme for Brownie's happiness almost as devotedly as Brownie was scheming and plotting for Clement's. Maud believed that the principal obstacle to her cousin's happiness was Anderson's lack of riches. And although every instinct prompted her to refrain from interference with his affairs, her love for Brownie overcame her great antipathy, and she set herself to help her cousin through Anderson, in the only way she knew.

Mrs. Northcott declared that Brownie was ill, and threatened her with the doctor; the very man of all others whom she wished to avoid.

Brownie's absorption in her detective pursuits had been quite sufficient to protect her from introspection even if she had been prone to any such tendency. She knew of her heart only as a physical fact, and that solely from authority.

But the confession she had made to Maud was none the less a confession to herself. She could not be deceived any longer; could no more plead ignorance before her own Court of Conscience.

She dreaded to meet either Anderson or Clement; feeling a new timidity in discussing her plans in secret with the one, a hesitation which was not unmixed with alarm when she looked forward to seeing the other.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLEMENT CHOOSES A PROFESSION.

It was not until the first week in September that Clement fulfilled his promise to go and see Mrs. Butterworth at the Rectory.

"Clement," she said, whilst he stood with one foot on the wheel of her Bath-chair, beneath her favourite sycamores, "what do you think of this news about the hospital? It is just what the Rector was wishing some one would do—to give five thousand pounds as a fund for the surgeon's salary. We shall be sure to retain Mr. Anderson now."

After amusing Mrs. Butterworth by his endeavours to guess the name of the donor, Clement learned that this was a mystery to the whole town. He stood for some time looking down at the fragile form by his side, watching the thin white hands as they moved with almost dazzling rapidity about a piece of crochet-work.

"Mrs. Butterworth," he said, at length, "this is the last time you will see me for a long while. I am going away."

"Going away, Clement! Maud and Brownie said nothing about it when they were here this morning."

"You are the first person I have told," he replied. "For a long time I have been thinking of going; but there were difficulties to get over. It has been a great mistake, my staying in Middleton. I ought to have gone at the time—directly after my father's death. However, nothing shall hinder me now."

Mrs. Butterworth, like everybody else in the town, was perfectly well acquainted with the provisions of Mr. Northcott's will, and the trust which had been confided to Henry Grayson.

"But, having remained amongst us so long," she suggested, "surely it would be wise to stay still a little while longer."

"I can't stand it," he exclaimed. "Did you see how I was treated at the fête the other day? Men who had known me since I was a child, cut me dead. Others flung me a nod, as they would fling a bone to a dog. I cannot breathe freely in Middleton. I want a new atmosphere. I mean to make a fresh start, Mrs. Butterworth."

"Poor Clement!" she said, ceasing her work and resting her thin hand on his brown one as she looked into his face, where surely honesty was written as plainly as Nature could write it. "Do you know that there is one great advantage I possess over those who are more robust than I am? No one ever attempts to take advantage of me, Clement. I cannot go to see people; but they all bring their troubles to me—just as they ought to do; and nobody ever tells me anything but the truth. I have wished to ask you for so long; this is the reason I told you to come to see me. Tell me, Clement, did you really do this thing of which they all accuse you?"

"Not all," he answered with emphasis, as he met her eyes frankly. "They do not all accuse me."

"No; but we need not quibble about a word. I know—everybody knows—how strongly Maggie believes in your innocence. Let us say, all but one, then, Clement."

"Ah," he cried, and there was a ring of true pathos in his voice, "but that one is more than all the rest of the world to me!"

Turning away, he took a few turns along the lawn, whilst Mrs. Butterworth—

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letting her hands for once rest idle in front of her—stared after him with misty eyes.

"Poor boy! I had no idea of this," she said, presently. "I don't think anybody has the least idea of it, Clement. Surely this used not to be so in the old days. I think perhaps the wisest thing you can do is to go away, after all."

While he was digesting this confirmation of his own opinion, they were joined by the Rector and Anderson — between whom a warm friendship had sprung up.

"Clement has been bidding me goodbye," said Mrs. Butterworth, resuming her crochet. "He is going to leave Middleton."

"You are, surely, not thinking of such a thing!" exclaimed Anderson, with unwonted bluntness.

"What Mrs. Butterworth says is quite correct," said Clement, speaking more collectedly, now that the men were there. "You never expected to hear me say I was tired of doing nothing, sir," he continued, addressing the Rector, "but it is a fact. What is more, my profession is chosen, and I intend to stick to it for better or worse."

"Do I understand that you have actually succeeded in obtaining a definite appointment?" enquired Mr. Butterworth, leaning forward to peer into Clement's face.

"It is open for me to take it or leave it, as I choose," was the reply; "but I know I shall like my work. It is fit for a gentleman; I shall have a horse to ride, a gun to myself, free rations, pocket-money—all a fellow can wish for. And, some day, I intend to come back and show these kind-hearted, charitable people of Middleton that the devil is farther away from me than they choose to believe."

"Ah, my dear boy," said Mr. Butterworth, as Clement bade him farewell, "remember this, the devil is never so near to us as when we think him at a safe distance."

"Well, Hope," he continued to his wife, when he returned from seeing Clement out, "so you have had your chance, at last. You must understand, Anderson, that this good wife of mine has an idea that no one can look her in the face and tell a lie. Did you put the crucial question? How did he pass through the ordeal?"

Instead of replying, Mrs. Butterworth went on with her work at a greater speed than ever. In her surprise at Clement's confession, she had forgotten everything else; amongst other things, that he had not answered her question. The alternatives that troubled her now were these: had Clement also overlooked her enquiry, or had he been glad to take advantage of the diversion to avoid it?

"Well, well; perhaps we had better not press the matter," said the Rector, observing her perturbation.

"I did ask him," she began; "but——" Then she stopped, remembering that she must not betray Clement's confidence—to Anderson, of all men in the world. For several pairs of eyes had, before now, espied him walking with Brownie in close conversation; and if it was the custom to come to Mrs. Butterworth with stories of trouble and sorrow, these were not the only tales which reached her ears.

"Ah," said the Rector, "I am sadly afraid that young fellow is lost; what do you say, Anderson?"

"Upon my word, I am afraid that the facts are against him," was the answer. "We know that he was overwhelmed with debts at the time, and I suppose he gave way to sudden temptation—as we all do, now and then, in various ways—and fell. I must own, however, that whenever I listen to his cousin, I am inclined, for the moment, to think differently. Faith begets faith, perhaps, and never was any faith stronger than that which Margaret Northcott has in Clement."

"Mr. Anderson," asked Mrs. Butterworth, abruptly, "do you think it possible that Maggie is cognisant of any facts, of which everybody else is ignorant?"

"Of any facts; no. She has a theory; I must confess it is not an altogether impossible one. It is plausible enough; and in her girlish, illogical way, she thinks it is already tested and proved. I am not at liberty to tell you more; I only heard it myself a day or two ago, and, personally, I don't share her confidence to the slightest degree. One thing I feel very strongly indeed. That this faith of hers in her cousin is, in itself, a noble and very beautiful thing!"

"But suppose, after all, her faith lacks foundation, Mr. Anderson? It will be a sad thing for poor Maggie if a day of disillusion ever comes to her."

"Mrs. Butterworth," said he, with deep earnestness, "I tremble to think what such an awakening must mean. There would be something tragic about it. No

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woman ever received a more cruel blow than hers would be. Her young life would be blasted at a stroke. As a simple matter of fact, I doubt whether she would survive such a shock. I feel most anxious for her; more anxious than I can tell you."

RIGHT AND LEFT.

EVERY little custom or peculiarity has a history attached to it; and it would be surprising, therefore, if so curious a problem as the general use of the right hand in preference to the left had escaped notice. It is, as a matter of fact, an old subject, and one that has furnished scope for a great deal of wild theorising. Even the derivation of the term "left" has been a source of much controversy. Archbishop Trench says the "left" hand is so called because it is left unemployed so much. In that view he does not receive much support; indeed, his conclusion has been sturdily opposed.

The question as to whether our ancestors were what we call "dexter"-handed, may be answered emphatically in the affirmative. All are agreed on this point. But were the ancient Hebrews a left-handed people? Doctor Erlenmeyer has given an interesting and learned lecture to prove that they were. Most of the Aryan peoples write from the left to the right of a sheet of paper, and in their books the lines run in the same direction. Most of the Semitic people, on the contrary, write from right to left. Instead of regarding this essential difference as a mere characteristic of habit, kept up by that reverence for tradition which is deeply rooted in the Semitic mind, Doctor Erlenmeyer thinks that the direction taken by the hand of a Semitic scribe was due to a physiological cause—namely, that the left hand was the better of the two—and insists that the writers of the Old Testament, and probably the early Talmudists after them, naturally wrote with their left hands, and would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to write with the other hand. Doctor Erlenmeyer says he has found striking confirmation of the theory in the Talmud, and cites a passage which insists that certain special prayers and inscriptions are always to be written with the right hand, and not with the left. As the execution of this exceptional work was difficult, and required time and patience, it is implied that the process of writing with the right hand was a departure from the ordinary method then in vogue.

History, however—as was pointed out soon after the publication of the Doctor's lecture—does not support this ingenious theory. The most ancient forms of Semitic letters within our reach are the Phœnician characters of the Moabite stone, which characters date from about the year 900 B.C. The inscription in this instance reads from left to right, as we do in the present day. So also do the following Semitic records: The inscription on the tomb of Eshmunazer, King of Sidon, 600 B.C.; the tariff of fees in the Temple of Baal at Marseilles; the inscription from the necropolis at Tharros, in the Museum of Cagliari, Sardinia; the Carpentias inscription from Carthage. Having quoted this list, a learned correspondent of the "British Medical Journal" proceeds to state that the practice of writing from right to left came into use about the time of Ezra, when probably the square form of the Hebrew characters began. "The earliest Greek inscriptions, nearly allied with the Phœnician, are," he adds, "sometimes written from right to left; others from left to right. Others, again, show how the difference between the two methods was bridged over by the immediate practice of writing alternately—like an ox ploughing — and therefore called Boustrophedon writing."

The nett result of this interesting controversy seems to be that the ancient Hebrews were approximately near Charles Reade's ideal, namely, "either-handed," or, rather, that they did not solely confine themselves to the education of the right hand. But the question asked nowadays is: "Is the use of the right hand, in preference to the left, natural, or is it acquired?"

Aristotle strongly contends that in this, as in all other instances, the organs of the right side are more powerful than those of the left.

Sir Charles Bell, in his Bridgwater Treatise on "The Hand," supports this view, and adds that the left side is more subject to attacks of disease.

"Original instinct," is Sir Benjamin Brodie's conclusion. "The reason of our being endowed with this particular instinct is," he says, "sufficiently obvious. How much inconvenience would arise, where it is necessary for different individuals to cooperate in manual operations, if some were to use one hand and some the other!"

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Plato, however, ridicules the idea that the use of the right hand is natural, and attributes the weakness of the left side to the bad habits established by nurses and mothers. In support of this theory we have the indisputable facts that a baby will take a rattle with either hand, and that children of four or six years old will offer the left hand in shaking hands—a mistake which most well-intentioned people pass off with a joke.

Another argument in the same direction is given in a curious work entitled "A Memorial for the Learned," the author of which, after remarking that he is "unsatisfied to great dubitation" as to the present custom, asks how it is that there is no difference in the senses of the two sides, and attributes the activity of the right side only to more use.

Finally, several doctors say there is no anatomical difference in the two hands.

Here is a conflict of authorities with a vengeance! Though it is not for us to step in and decide where "doctors disagree," certain conclusions are so obvious that they will occur to anybody after a little reflection. In the first place, if the use of what we call the "dexter" hand, in preference to the left, were an "original instinct," all men alike would be right-handed—there could be no exception. The fact that there are exceptions proves conclusively that the partiality for the right hand is acquired.

In support of his contention as to the strength of the left side, Sir Charles Bell says: "No boy hops on his left foot."

This, however, is wrong, as many can testify. Indeed, in the copy of his work now before us, there is this annotation by "another hand:" "A mistake; the writer of this being an exception."

There seems no reason to doubt, then, that the left side might be educated equally as well as the right. In cases of accident, the left hand is often made to do work that was formerly monopolised by the dexter hand; and the special excellence which not infrequently characterises performances under such a difficulty is notorious. Of a schoolmaster who was born without a right hand, the following amusing epigram was written:

Though of thy right hand nature hath bereft thee,
Right well thou writest with thy hand that's left thee.

In this particular case the dexter hand could not have been missed; but even when it is, the left hand soon becomes accustomed to its new duties.

Charles Reade, who once started a long newspaper discussion on ambidexterity, was of opinion that mankind can, ought to, and eventually will be, either-handed. That it is possible to train both hands is evident from the story told of Sir Edwin Landseer, who on one occasion drew a deer's head with one hand while he was drawing a landscape with the other. Again, Professor Edwin Morse, of Salem, Massachusetts, could draw simultaneously, and that, too, before an audience, two different objects with either hand; or he would draw an object with one hand, and at the same time write the names of the parts of the object with the other. Further examples of this ambidextrous work could be given, but they are not necessary, since in every-day life we can see abundant proof of what is possible in this direction. Piano players and organists, for instance, have to train both hands. Taking these and many other circumstances into consideration, there can be no doubt that children could be taught to use both hands with equal freedom and facility; and perhaps, if they were left to themselves, the result would be just the same. But it is imperative that a child should be taught to eat, dress, play, and write as quickly as possible. This is patent. To teach a child to do all these things with both hands would take nearly, if not quite, twice as long as with one hand only; and therefore, as a matter of expediency, the latter course is generally adopted; and it must be admitted that, taking all things into consideration, it is the more judicious one. On the ground of economy of time, then, it is extremely doubtful whether Charles Reade's ideal will be realised.

But how is it that what we call the "right" hand is always chosen for education? To say the least, it is doubtful, as we have seen, whether the cause is to be found in an "original instinct." Perhaps the real cause is due to the sentiment which has always been attached to the left side. In some European countries—the United Kingdom among the number—the wedding-ring is placed on the fourth finger of the left hand. The theory that on that finger a particular vein, connected with the heart, is touched, is shown by anatomy to be incorrect. Then everybody is familiar with the fact that at one time numberless superstitions obtained regarding the cardiac organ. Supposing, then, that the ancient Hebrews were left-handed, it is not at all improbable that the change

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gradually took place owing to some such reasons as these; and, once made, one can easily understand that it would be handed down from generation to generation. It may be true that, nowadays, the left is the weak side; but the cause may be due to the fact that for ages the right hand has been developed at its expense. Moreover, typical developement counts for something.

To bear out his theory, Charles Reade said that the left hand (closed) is the favourite weapon of a pugilist. This, however, is a mistake. It is true that the pugilist, like the wrestler, always presents his left side as an attacking front, and, indeed, makes his onslaught from that side; but although to some it might appear to be chosen for its strength, it is really put forward as a sort of sophistry. A pugilist who put forward his right side would be called a left-handed boxer. The left is, in short, the artistic hand, and the right is reserved for more serious work; and the practice of the prize ring, in this respect, is precisely the same as that generally adopted.

WHERE IS OPHIR?

So much attention is being directed to gold mines in all parts of the world just now, that this question has a special interest.

Where is the place from whence they brought "gold, four hundred and twenty talents," to King Solomon? Presumably some place where also was found "the precious onyx and the sapphire," mentioned by Job along with "the gold of Ophir." Presumably, also, a place in which the metal was found both by alluvial washings and in quartz-veins; for while Job speaks of laying-up "gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook," Isaiah speaks of the "golden wedge of Ophir," which may readily be understood as meaning a nugget. And, also, evidently a place in or near the coast, and in the tropics, for "the navy of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of Almug-trees and precious stones." The Almug-tree is supposed by some to be the Algum, or red sandal-wood.

It is remarkable that there is hardly an auriferous portion of the known world which has not claimed to be, or had claims advanced for its being, the Ophir of the Queen of Sheba. Columbus believed that Hispaniola was the ancient Ophir. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, thought it must be Madagascar, because the island was sometimes called Orphi. But, unfortunately for this theory, there is no gold in Madagascar, and no record of any ever having been found there.

Some people have located Ophir in Ceylon; but Ceylon, though rich in precious stones and spices, has no gold. Others have placed it in Arabia Felix; but there is no gold there, either. It is true that the author of "Asiatic Nations" has ingeniously argued that the fact of Arabia not producing gold now is no proof that in ancient days it did not yield rich supplies of the metal. Job, he says, who is supposed to have been an Arabian, displays a minute acquaintance with mining, and if Ethiopia produced gold in plenty, why should not Arabia? Ingenious this, but not convincing. On the same line of reasoning one might contend that, although there are now no snakes in Iceland, that chilly region might once have been the Garden of Eden.

There is a much more ingenious theory stated in one of Mr. Baring-Gould's books. A reverend archæologist argues that when the Phœnicians came to Cornwall they must have brought Jews with them, since the existing names of Marazion, Port Isaac, Jacobstow, Davidstow, Redruth, Saint Sampson, and others, are clearly of Hebraic origin. Then, he said, Ophir is described in Genesis as lying between Mesha and Sephar. There is a place called Meshaw in North Devon and another place called Sheepstor in South Devon, which is as like Sephar as one can reasonably expect after so many centuries. Then this ingenious theorist drew a line from Meshaw to Sheepstor, and found that it passed through a farm called Upavar. There it was, as plain as a pikestaff—Upavar (Ophir), the land of gold! So a company was floated; but it did not find any gold except what was put there by the promoters.

It is always a bad thing for facts when they will not square with theory. The author of "Asiatic Nations" is content to believe in the former existence of gold in Arabia; but he cannot locate Ophir there. On the contrary, he argues that it is the name, not of a place, but of a vague region; and that it was "the general name for the rich countries of the South lying on the Arabian, African, and Indian coasts as far as at that time known."

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Yes, but how far were these extensive coasts known at that time? King Solomon was a wise man. He did not send forth a navy to roam at large in search of an indefinite place. When Hiram sailed for Ophir, we may be sure that he knew where he was going; and, moreover, Ophir was in the territory of the Queen of Sheba, and, therefore, was a recognisable and particular spot, wherever it was.

Bruce, however, made a happier hit than Madagascar. He says that there is no gold found in Abyssinia, and that all the gold used there is brought from the Shangalla country. Then, further south, in the Sofala country, in the region of the Zambesi, he says "There are mines of gold and silver, than which none can be more abundant, especially in silver. They bear the traces of having been wrought from the earliest ages." This was written a hundred years ago; but fifty years later Humboldt comments on the presence of gold deposits at Sofala, and the fact that in the Septuagint, Ophir is rendered "Sofara." This is much nearer than the Cornish gentleman — only the difference of a single letter.

Now there are so many other very remarkable coincidences, or suggestive circumstances, about the Sofala country, it is worth while to pursue the investigation a little further, in spite of the positive assertion of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," that Ophir can be placed neither in India nor Sofala.

Sofala is in Manica-land, to the south of the Zambesi. Doctor Livingstone wrote of this region: "Gold is washed in the beds of the rivers within a couple of days of Teté, on the Zambesi, sixteen degrees south, thirty degrees fifty minutes east. The natives are fully aware of its value, but seldom search for it, and never dig deeper than four or five feet. Only common wooden basins have hitherto been used. Beyond Leuga is a range of mountains called Mashinga (thirteen degrees south, thirty-two degrees east), to which the Portuguese in former times went to wash gold in the neighbourhood of Teté. They called the gold in the native language, delama."

Here there is the first clue—the present existence of gold. Next, we find that gold was found there three centuries ago by the Portuguese, for Vasco di Gama speaks of the sources of the Zambesi as a place where gold is to be found. It is said that the Portuguese have, since 1650, exported over a million pounds' worth of gold from the Zambesi, where they formed considerable settlements in the seventeenth century.

Major Erskine, in a paper contributed some time time ago to the Royal Geographical Society, urged the exploration of the country between the Limpopo and the Sabia, as a part of it is described in old geography books as Sophela, or Sophira, or Sophir and Monomotaba (the last meaning, in Zulu, "the children of the mines"), and is stated to be very rich in gold, several millions sterling having been exported thence by the Portuguese.

Major Erskine goes on to say that it is death for a native to speak of the gold mines or the ancient ruins. These ruins helped to impress Major Erskine with the belief that here we must look for the ancient Ophir.

In 1866 Herr Karl Manch discovered in Matabelé-land an old gold-field, eighty miles long by two or three miles wide, and he located Ophir in latitude twenty degrees fifteen minutes thirty-four seconds south, thirty-one degrees thirty-seven minutes forty-five seconds east. His reason for this precision is that there, four thousand two hundred feet above the sea, he found the ruins of an ancient building, the walls of which, built of hewn blocks, with large projecting stone beams, were, in some places, thirty feet high. These ruins are described as very extensive, and as rising from the very edge of a precipitous cliff.

Similar ruins have been since discovered within eighty miles of Teté or Tati; and Mr. Mackenzie, the British Commissioner in Bechuana-land, says that he has seen in that country the remains of stone structures quite unlike anything erected by the natives. In the Kalahari Desert, Mr. G. H. Farnie also came upon some very remarkable ruins of ancient buildings which are described in his book "Through the Kalahari Desert." His discovery was remarkable:

"We camped beside a long line of stones which looked like a Chinese wall after an earthquake, and which, on examination, proved to be the ruins of quite an extensive structure, in some places buried beneath the sand, but in others fully exposed to view. We traced the remains for nearly a mile, mostly a heap of huge stones, but all flat-sided, and here and there with the cement perfect, and plainly visible between the layers. The top row of stones were worn away by the weather

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and the drifting sands, some of the upper ones curiously rubbed on the underside, and standing out like a centre table on one leg. The general outline of this wall was in the form of an arc, inside which lay, at intervals of about forty feet apart, a series of heaps of masonry in the shape of an oval or an obtuse ellipse about a foot and a half deep, and with a flat bottom, but hollowed out at the sides for about a foot from the edge. Some of these heaps were cut out of the solid rock, others were formed of more than one piece of stone, fitted together very accurately. . . . On digging down in the middle of the arc we came upon a pavement about twenty feet wide, made of large stones. The outer stones were long ones, and lay at right angles to the inner ones. This pavement was intersected by another similar one at right angles, forming a Maltese cross, in the centre of which, at one time, must have stood an altar, column, or some sort of monument, for the base was quite distinct, composed of loose pieces of fluted masonry."

Mr. H. H. Johnston, the well-known African traveller, who has been recently appointed British Consul at Mozambique, is credited with the intention of thoroughly exploring the country where these ruins are said to exist, and also the region described by Karl Manch. Meanwhile, we learn—on Natal authority—that the Hon. G. C. Dawnay, of that Colony, saw and sketched similar masses of masonry within eighty miles of Tati, and that others are reported in the Transvaal.

All these different remains are far apart, and suggestive of an extensive settlement for an express purpose. The existence of gold in the country, mentioned by Livingstone and confirmed by the actual operations of the Portuguese, goes some way in favour of the conclusion that the object of the early settlers was gold-mining. But who were they?

It is evident that these remains are of vastly older date than the Portuguese occupation, and it is also evident that they could not have been the work of the primitive tribes who now people these wilds.

Mr. H. O'Niell, late British Consul at Mozambique, says that stories are still repeated by the natives about "a white people, with long black hair," who came to their country long before the Portuguese, "to dig for gold." The evidence, which is coming forth bit by bit, is still scanty; but is all in favour of the supposition that the country was occupied long ago by settlers from one or more of the great centres of the ancient world—either Babylonian, Phœnician, or Egyptian. "It was not by the Arab, for it is impossible to believe that a nation possessing a written language and extensive literature could have planted itself so firmly in the interior, erecting substantial buildings, fortresses, and the like, and yet have left no record whatever of such a work."

Philologists may find employment in tracing the modification of the name Ophir into Sophira, Sophara, Sophale, Sophir, Sofala. The connection with the Greek "Sophica," and the name given to Ophir in the Septuagint, is certainly remarkable. Not less so is the fact that the principal river which washes this reputedly gold-bearing region is the Sabia, which has a very suggestive resemblance to Sheba, whence came the famous Queen, attracted by the marvellous tales about King Solomon; which she, doubtless, heard from those who came for the gold of Ophir.

We do not profess to have exhausted the subject, nor can it be contended that the evidence so far forthcoming is conclusive; but we have said enough to show that there is more reason for locating Ophir in the country of the Zambesi, than in any other region hitherto put forward for the claim.

HOPE AND DESPAIR.

I HAVE just been walking in the Pincian Gardens of Rome, and admiring from their marble terraces the strong high swell of the dome of Saint Peter's, above the multitudinous chimney-pots and methodical blocks of new residential buildings, which represent the city of the Cæsars in its modern form.

These sunny gardens are always delightful. When the band discourses sweet or martial music in their midst, great is the gathering of nursemaids and infants; of old gentlemen who husband the energy of their legs as the most precious and fleeting possession still left to them; and of the Roman youth with the seal of fashion upon them.

For an hour or two there is gaiety. The roll of coroneted carriages, to and fro on the gravel, is incessant. Now and then a horse of noble degree chafes at the music,

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plunges, and makes a mischievous feint. But his thoroughbred soul calms when he is out of sight and hearing of the evil, and, with inflated nostrils, he trots tranquilly, while he inhales the balm of the breeze which rustles the pines. In a little while, however, the hour of fashion has passed. By twos and threes, the maids and old gentlemen and gilded youth desert the gardens. The wind soon has them all to itself.

Yet, even at dead of night, the Pincian can hardly be said to be depopulated. Its walks are sentinelled with the busts of Italy's illustrious dead. Any country might be proud of such an assemblage. Emperors and kings, soldiers, statesmen, artists, composers, historians, architects—all are represented. There are also divers poets. Among these is the bust of Giacomo Leopardi. The poet who sang so tunefully of Despair does not please in marble. His was a spirit impossible to translate into stone. Besides, the work is from a cast taken after death, and the sculptor has wrought with only too much truthfulness. The hollows of the cheeks and the temples, and the sharpness of the nose, are eloquent of death.

But, criticism apart, I was glad to see Leopardi here. I do not suppose he himself would have cared much for this kind of fame. The man who rivalled Solomon in the stern passion of conviction with which he bewailed the vanity of all things—all, from the first laugh of the new-born child to the death-sigh of the wearied octogenarian—was not very likely to feel a keen yearning for that "last infirmity of noble minds," even allowing for the average amount of discordance between poetic assertion and actual sentiments. But he could not well be excluded from a court of honour to which Parini, Ugo Foscolo, and Monti have been admitted.

Leopardi is dear to Italian hearts, and especially to the young. The latter are, of course, more apt than their sage, seasoned seniors to be caught by the charm of melancholy. Youth is essentially a selfish epoch. Any appeal which flatters the youthful heart with a suggestion of its importance is likely to get abundant audience. What, then, is more irresistible, more deliciously saddening, than melodious verse which conjures the unfledged to believe that they are in a very lamentable plight, and that they are the most pitiable objects conceivable? For an appeal of this kind starts with the assumption that men deserve better treatment at the hands of Fate than they receive; that they are, in short, very fine fellows, at the mercy of a tyrant. The youth, whose head is busy with many more aspirations than he could fulfil in ten ordinary lifetimes, accepts this conclusion as a relief. It is an apology for abstention from effort, as seductive as it is calamitous.

"Yes, I am desperately unhappy," he confesses to himself, and, perhaps, to the world. "There is no chance of my doing a tithe of what I could do. I may as well, therefore, do nothing. And, besides, there is Angelina! She declines to be my wife. Was there ever such a world as this? It were certainly, as has been said before, better never to have been born; or, having been born, to have died when I was a boy. Everything proves that I am not one of those whom the gods love!"

Is there aught more unpleasant, and even irritating, than this kind of strain? It is, moreover, so diabolically egotistical. And yet it is such puerile discontent and querulousness as this that, as a rule, lurks at the back of Melancholy the beetle-browed.

The Italians are even fonder than ourselves of scoring their statues and public places with initials and inscriptions. Perhaps they derived the habit, by inoculation, from sons of those Greeks who have left their "grafiti" on the pyramids of Egypt. More probably it is a passion of human nature as innate as the self-love of which it is an expression. Be that as it may, Leopardi's bust has not been spared. It is honoured — or defiled — like an Indian letter, with crossed writing. But, for the moment, we may disregard all the Pietros, and Vittorios, and Giacomos, and Giovannis who have bescratched the stone. A sentence in pencil, in a girl's handwriting, is more attractive: "La tua vita fu misera perche senza amor" (thy life was wretched because without love). This indictment is, by now, quite classic in its antiquity. But the words, written, as they were, the other day, by a hand of flesh and blood, and perhaps at the dictation of a heart warm with the sense of requited affection, seem to galvanise it into new life under other forms. One is tempted to ask afresh: Is there anything in the charge? Is love of the kind meant so indispensable for the happiness of life?

The question will be differently answered by different persons. We are so beneficently constituted, that we all have our own ideal of terrestrial happiness,

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which is, however, only in part attainable. The unattainable part of the ideal is the bait of hope that lures us on through life. Thus, were I the fifth heir-apparent to a crown, I have no doubt I should aspire to the throne up to the final year of my life. As it is, my ideals are largely of the literary kind. Other men have their ideals, whether of character or worldly achievement. Most women, up to a certain age, dream of an ideal husband.

Of such threads as these, and of conduct, is the texture that we call happiness spun. And our hopes are the steps that lead us upward to this happiness.

Now Leopardi, from an early age, explicitly renounced the olive-branch of hope. The very pains he took to declare that he was without hope, and without the possibility of hope, indicated his as one of those ardent, impetuous natures which are, in fact, as quick to hope as to despair. But he did not give himself a fair chance. He was reckless of health—one of the strongest buttresses of hope and happiness. And he harped ever on the one theme: saw darkness where light was, and cherished his constitutional and acquired gloom until hope became alien to him. Thenceforward, to its close, his life was a dreary night, without promise of sun.

The truth is that a man can better afford to sacrifice his dinner daily for a year than live without hope for a week. And Nature has recognised that it is so. What phrase is more common in our mouths than the simple but significative "I hope."? Nor is there any human being, howsoever forlorn in material possessions, or howsoever afflicted, who was not originally endowed with this capacity for hope.

Go to the hospitals and workhouses, where one might suppose it were easy to find despair in many aspects. The doctor will whisper to you that this or that invalid is doomed, and that he cannot, by all the evidence of human foresight and experience, live one day more. "Well, and how are you?" you say to the sick man; and perhaps you cannot help betraying in your tone the pity you feel for him, thus hovering between two worlds, about one of which alone, the one he is leaving, you are able to assure yourself that you know anything decisive.

"Oh, much better," he replies, with strong hope in his voice and his eyes. "I think I shall soon be well."

Next, visit the veterans' ward in a hospital. Surely here you may well expect to find "dull despair" triumphant. What enjoyment can these luckless ones now find in life? Some, at any rate. The bleared old crone in the corner holds fast to the pleasures of living, represented in the bone snuff-box in her hand, and the few grains of dust it contains. Furthermore, she knows to a minute when it is meal-time; and she always sits down with a princely appetite to the pauper fare provided for her by the State. On the other hand, the ancient dame next to her, with her feet on the fender, has turned most of her thoughts heavenward. Her Bible is as dear to her as the love of mother and daughter in one. If she does not hope very strenuously for the good things of terrestrial existence, she has the most lively assurance of happiness in store for her in heaven. The nature of that happiness is an enduring riddle for her imagination; a riddle, too, which it gives her the profoundest satisfaction to entertain, though she knows she may not solve it while she lives.

Honestly, can either of these old women be compassionated? I think not. Leopardi, the heir to a coronet and all the pleasures that wait upon earthly rank, might well have envied either of them.

Take a fresh illustration. The other day—March the twenty-fifth—it was the Festival of the Annunciation. When the afternoon began to wane, I entered the church of a convent famous in Rome for the sweet singing of its nuns. The altar was aglow with lights. As many annunciata lilies, of marble whiteness, stood in vases between the candles. A high, strong iron gate divided the church into two parts. The section nearer the altar was for the inmates of the convent. Tall candles were set by some of the seats apportioned for the nuns, and these candles were girt with lilies like those upon the altar.

Soon the nuns themselves appeared. They filed into the church at a funeral pace. Row after row knelt by the lighted candles, and then sat down. Some of the fairest faces of Rome were here, for the convent is recruited from the noblest of Roman families. They were of various ages. Fifty or sixty were little children, some years distant from their teens. They, like their elders, trod into the church with a graveyard step, and, with bowed heads, knelt and sat down.

Anon, the "Kyrie Eleison" was sung by the choir and the other nuns in antiphony. It was more than melody. I

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know nothing about musical composition. But I do not scruple to hazard the assertion that the charm and pathos of this vesper litany was quite subjective. At such a time, nothing could have passed the lips of these fair innocents without becoming etherealised. When all was over, one left the church in a measure spellbound.

To grown children of the world, what state of life could seem more desperate than that of these children of the convent? But the latter are taught to view it otherwise. They, on their part, compassionate their frivolous little sisters. No one may say who really reaps the more terrestrial happiness—the children of the world or the children of the convent. But hope and happiness of one kind or another are with them both.

Look next in a very different direction. The tables of the Casino at Monte Carlo doubtless point a moral; but that is not our affair just at present. For our purpose it suffices that they bring together, with the force of a mighty loadstone, not a few men and women who have hoped and been defeated in their hopes in other walks of life. Never mind why or wherefore they have thus suffered defeat. Perhaps they met with their deserts; perhaps their defeats were for their own benefit; perhaps they were hardly used. Enough that they are here with as much stern, subdued resolution in their hearts, and mirrored in their faces, as if they had never yet met their match among human beings. "Here, at least, I may do something," says one of them in bitter self-communion. "Surely it is not so difficult to make a living here. Given a few pounds capital, I do not see why I cannot win a napoleon a day, at the lowest estimate."

In fact, hope is nowhere more invincible than at Monte Carlo. Is it that Nature here makes the expiring effort in so many men and women who have already been spendthrift of hope? I do not know. Certain it is, however, that Despair also haunts this "bad, beautiful spot" as she haunts no other place. She is not loud in declaration of her presence. There is not much visible melodrama at the tables. The tragedy is wrought internally, or perhaps a stone's throw away. The last five-franc piece has been raked methodically into the bank, with gold and notes to the amount of a small fortune. It only remains to slip out of the room as quietly as possible, walk unconcernedly through the crowded vestibule, where men and women of a score of nationalities are smoking their cigarettes in easy prattle about things in general and the "run of colour" in particular; to descend the steps, away from the glare of the electric light; to choose that corner among the palms and laurels which seems least frequented by the watchful police—and in a moment all is ended. Despair has her bright rival by the throat once again; and at Hope's overthrow and man's shame perchance "the angels" still "shed sad tears."

It is probable that one of the most fruitful causes of despair is the habit of hoping extravagantly. It is all very well in children, but in those who are not children it is to be condemned as either an error of temperament or of judgement. Like other bad habits, it is not very difficult to bring into subjection at the outset of serious life. But when it is fostered, it acquires a lamentable power.

It may be said, in protest, that it is cruel to chill the aspirations of youth with such an arctic solution of prudence as this; and that it may well be left to worldly experience to discipline the novice in such a matter. Perhaps so. But on the other hand, here, as elsewhere, to be forewarned is to be forearmed; and I for one would rather always travel the middle path between tears and laughter, than be one minute roaring with Democritus, and the next sighing like Heraclitus.

People who are so monstrously prolific of hope somewhat resemble that famous Abbé, of whom Baldassar Castiglione tells a tale in his book, "Il Cortegiano." The Duke Frederic of Urbino, who was building a palace, was troubled about the disposal of the quantity of earth thrown out by the workmen engaged in excavating for the foundations. A certain Abbé of his court at length declared that he had thought out a solution of the difficulty. "My lord," he said, "bid them dig a very large hole somewhere else, and put the earth in that." "And what will you do with the soil you take out of this new excavation?" asked the Duke. "Oh," replied the Abbé, "make the hole so big that it will be able to receive that as well as the other." The excellent man could not be brought to see that he was so imbecile as he appeared to the Duke, and to all whom the Duke afterwards entertained with the story.

Similarly, they who plead that a person's happiness is commensurate with the in-

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tensity of the magnitude of his hopes, seem to be oblivious of the huge array of disappointments that are sure to be cast into the scales of such a life. The greater the hope the bitterer the disappointment.

A crossing-sweeper begins the day with the sober hope that he may earn a shilling. In the evening he counts his gains, and finds that he has fifteen pence in his pocket. His comrade, a boot-black, in the morning built agreeable castles in the air, and at night found that he was no richer in purse than the crossing-sweeper. It seems to me that the crossing-sweeper is likely to be the happier of these two boys, though I am ready enough to acknowledge that the boot-black derived much intangible pleasure from his flights of fancy.

The best of moderation in hopes is, that the man who hopes moderately will never be without hope. He will be spared destitution of the worst kind. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." "Desire is dead within me. I hope as little as I fear. All is evil."

With these and the like moans of Solomon and Leopardi he will never be in sympathy. He is fast set on that firmer road which enables him to say: "I always hope for the best and expect the worst."

OUR BEST.

To do one's best; the path is hard and long,
So many lives to linger on unblessed,
Such jarring measure in recurrent song;
To do one's best.

While doubt and question round our musings throng,
And still in silent suffering, pinched and gray,
Our brethren toil, in humble patience strong,

What can we do to light the weary day,
To right the wrong, for ages unredressed?
"Hush," calm and sure, the ocean voices say,
"Just do your best."

ROUND ABOUT PARIS.

CHANTILLY AND COMPIÈGNE.

There is something about the terminus of the Northern Railway of France which is redolent of exile and departure. There is that endless Rue Lafayette by which it is approached, and which, starting from the heart of Paris, seems to terminate in the provinces. Elsewhere, the provincial element is absorbed in the general crowd; but here, where there is nothing but going and coming, it asserts itself strongly. The patois of northern France is strong in the cafés, where stout farmers, and blue-bloused peasants, and stout ladies in cachemire shawls, call loudly for unfashionable drinks. And those who wander in the neighbourhood have the air of having already left Paris, or of not having yet arrived there. It is the favourite hunting-ground of sellers of toys, who have an eye for fathers and mothers of families, and who successfully appeal to people who, at first sight, seem unlikely customers for performing figures or gaily-coloured balloons. On the look-out for strangers, too, are the sellers of bargains—with wonderful amber cigarholders, at a price that would hardly remunerate an industrious thief; pipes, briquets, and what not, with which Jules may dazzle his comrades at the village café, or which may prove acceptable souvenirs from Stephanie for her lover.

And the terminus itself displays a serious air, even if it be a "a train of pleasure" that is on the eve of departure. The echoing corridors and gloomy halls; the sombre railway carriages of ancient build; the fourgons that rumble past, shaking the earth as they go; all these only inspire sad-coloured reflections. When once the train is started, however, there is no more gloom. Paris is half-concealed in a veil of blinding sunshine. Montmartre looms out like a summer thunder-cloud, the green banks of the fortifications slip by, market-gardens and drying-grounds flash past, and then we are among watercourses and streams that flow one knows not whither. There is a glimpse of a broad river, the Seine; and yet, what is it doing up here in the north? But the river flows where it will, neglecting points of the compass, and we see no more of it; but presently plunge into a wooded, tufted country, where the sweltering heat is modified by a cool, refreshing breeze.

From the lofty viaduct that crosses the valley of the little river Theve, there is a charming glimpse of the wooded country beneath; wild forest land, with a chain of lonely pools—the "Etangs de Comelle"—among which stands a modern Gothic castle, which occupies the site of the ancient Château of la Reine Blanche, that Loge de Viarmes, about which are tales and legends told. And here, in all its barbaric pomp and glitter, often assembled the cavalcade of the Royal hunt—

> With hawk, and hound, and hunting-spear.

Hardly more secluded then than now were the paths of the wild forest. The deer still roam among the brakes, the wild boar routs in the thicket; it is only bird-

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life that is wanting, and where feathered songsters once filled the groves with melody, there is now only a melancholy silence.

All this country formerly belonged, as much of it still belongs, to the great domain of Chantilly, "the sacred abode of the Montmorency and Condé." It is still a kind of feudal country hereabouts, with old towers on the hills and remains of old abbeys in the luxuriant valleys; and, indeed, it would be difficult to find more pleasant country for a rambling visit —if there were only time in life to make it—than this which lies among the vales of the river Oise and its tributary streams.

There is something pleasingly reposeful and calm in the little town of Chantilly—except, indeed, at race times, when the gay crowd of Paris invades and carries it by storm. There is nothing brighter and gayer than the scene of the French Derby, with its stately surroundings of park and gardens, and the forest that closes all in, unless it be the English Goodwood. It is on the Pelouse that the races are held, between town and forest, and overlooking the course on the side of the town are the magnificent stables of the Château, a relic of the grandeur of the Princes de Condé, where a hundred and eighty, or so, of horses would be standing at their mangers, and with a handsome riding-school in the centre. And where it was, sometimes, the fancy of one of the later Princes to give a grand banquet, the lines of stables being shut in by rich hangings which, at a given signal, were raised, disclosing the long rows of glossy-coated steeds tranquilly munching their evening feed. And thus the horses seemed to share in the banquet; but whether the Prince designed a satire on his guests, or simply desired to give them pleasure, is not very evident.

It was this same Prince who—after the fall of the Empire, when the Condé was restored with his cousins, the elder Bourbons—gave entertainment to the Emperor Alexander of Russia. The main building of the Château, which was once the palace of the Condés, had been left in ruins by the Revolution, and the feast was spread in one of the subsidiary galleries. Rain came on during the proceedings, and poured in through the dilapidated roof; but umbrellas were in readiness, and the Imperial guest finished his meal under the shade of a mighty gingham.

The Condés, however, were not the original holders of the domain of Chantilly. It had belonged to the Montmorencys before them. In still earlier times the castle of Chantilly had belonged to the Counts of Senlis, being a stronghold that gave its possessor the practical and titular rule of the surrounding country, at a time when the kingdom of France had hardly been evolved from the confused elements of victorious barbarism and a fragmentary civilisation. The Counts came to an end sometime in the fourteenth century, and the last of them bequeathed his castle to Guy de Laval, a Montmorency "pur sang," and who had a strong hand to hold what he had gotten.

But civilisation had so far recovered itself that people had to pay their debts, and Guy was obliged to sell his castle to a mere roturier, who happened to be the Royal Chancellor. But a Montmorency won back the castle by the simple expedient of marrying the heiress. The fortunate wooer, Jean, was a widower, with two grown-up sons, who quarrelled bitterly with their stepmother, and, finding the place too hot for them, went over to the Duke of Burgundy—that Charles the Bold, whose power overshadowed that of the French King. The old Baron, their father, who was a devoted adherent of King Louis the Eleventh, summoned his sons in due legal form to return to the paternal and Royal allegiance, and as they would not come, he cut them out of the succession. So the honours and estates of the family all went to his son by the Chancellor's daughter.

And this son, who bore the name of William—a name particularly distasteful to the French from time immemorial—served the French Kings faithfully one after another, from Louis the Eleventh down to Francis the First—a long period to be covered by the life of one man. But they were a tough and long-lived race, these old Montmorencys; and the son of William, the somewhat famous Constable of France, who bore the name of Anne, puzzling to young English students from its apparently feminine character — this Anne de Montmorency, at seventy-four years of age, had his days cut short on the field of battle, killed by one Robert Stuart, in the wars of religion.

But this branch, or it might be called the main stem of the house of Montmorency, came to an untimely end in the person of Henry, Duc de Montmorency, who was accused of conspiring against the monarchy, and executed in consequence,

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while still in his youth. As Chantilly came with a lass it went with a lass; for Henry's sister, Charlotte, who inherited the grand domain, was given in marriage to the Prince de Condé, a kind of poor relation of the reigning monarch, Henri le Grand. The relationship, indeed, was close enough, the Prince being a scion of the house of Navarre, and first cousin to the King, although by several removes. For the Condés had been used up rapidly enough. There was the famous Calvinistic Condé, King Henry's uncle:

> Condé, qui vit en moi le seul fils de son frère,
> M'adopta, me servit et de maître et de père.

Such is the account that Henry, then only King of Navarre, gives to our Queen Elizabeth in Voltaire's once famous but now forgotten epic of the "Henriade," and he tells of his fall at one of the earlier battles of the religious wars.

> O plaines de Jarnac! ô coup trop inhumain!

The second prince, Henry's favourite companion, died in his prime, not without suspicions of foul play; but he left a young wife who gave birth to a posthumous child, about whose legitimacy serious doubts were raised. The stern leaders and elders of the Calvinists had, it is said, decided against the claims of the new-born child; but the young Princess threw herself into the arms of the Catholics, the boy was brought up in that faith, and there was no question henceforth as to his rights, which indeed seem to have been valid enough. But henceforth the house of Condé counted against, instead of in favour of, the Huguenot faction.

The young Prince brought up at the Court of Henry must be provided with a wife, and his Royal cousin provided nobly for him in bestowing upon him the hand of Charlotte de Montmorency, the heiress of Chantilly and of the great possessions of the house. But the gift was one upon which there was a certain reserve. Charlotte's girlish charms had infatuated the amorous greybeard of a monarch. The King pursued the young bride everywhere, and she betrayed some coquetry in the matter, so that the young Prince had finally to elope with his own wife, carrying her off, much against her will, beyond the frontier. Charlotte could not forgive her husband's rough way of enforcing his marital rights, and there existed a long estrangement between the pair. But one obstacle to their domestic happiness was removed by the dagger of Ravaillac; and the Prince falling under suspicion with the Queen Regent, was arrested and sent to Vincennes. At the news of her husband's imprisonment Charlotte's heart relented. She hastened to Vincennes, she obtained leave to share her husband's prison, and with him she lived in honourable captivity for several years, during which two children were born to them. Louis, the great Condé, as he was afterwards called, was the fourth son of this pair; and his elder brothers dying in infancy, he was brought up to take a great part in the world, taking the family title of the Duc d'Enghien.

Cardinal Richelieu was then in the plenitude of his power, and the Prince de Condé was a zealous partisan and even parasite of the great Minister. It was the Prince who proposed an alliance between his son and the Cardinal's niece, graciously approved of by his eminence. But the marriage which followed was highly distasteful to the bridegroom, who hated the Cardinal and all his works, and considered himself degraded by the alliance.

With the great Condé begins the brilliant life of his great Château of Chantilly. We have nothing to do with his battles, or with the almost instinctive genius that led him to victory, when, as a raw youth, he overruled the plans of veteran chiefs. His life at Chantilly alone concerns us here; his fêtes, his splendid banquets, his artists, his musicians, his comedians. Under the great Prince, everything became famous—the gardens, the parks, the wilderness, the cascades. The splendid woods and groves; the freshness and verdure everywhere; the pure, delicate air; the wide extent of chase and forest—all combined to render Chantilly an ideal residence for prince or monarch, by the side of which Versailles appears but as a vulgar "caserne." That the great Condé was not particularly happy there, goes without saying. There were his debts; and there was his wife, who, despised and neglected in earlier years, now proved a thorn in his side, and eventually was removed, under a "lettre de cachet," to parts unknown. Yet at least he was happy in his cook. It was Vatel, the renowned Vatel—chief of the chefs—crown of all cooks of the past or future. And he lost Vatel.

The fate of Vatel is intimately linked with all memories of Chantilly, as it has come down to us in the piquant letters of Madame de Sévigné. The Prince was

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giving a great fête to his monarch, Louis the Fourteenth. The formal splendours of Versailles were cast in the shade by the rural delights of Chantilly. The tables were spread in the open air, the ground being thickly strewn with jonquils. Vatel had surpassed himself in the menu; the wines and liqueurs were of the choicest; the King was in the best of humours; and all went merry as a marriage bell.

But to the eye of the chef all was not well. The roast had fallen short; and at two tables, out of twenty-five or more, it had been wanting altogether. Vatel felt himself overwhelmed with shame. He retired to his chamber in despair. The Prince himself hastened to comfort him and restore his artist's pride, with words of praise and appreciation. But it was of no use. His highness was full of goodness, said the dejected chef, but there remained the melancholy fact—the roast had failed. And the strain of preparation had been too great for the unhappy Vatel; for nights he had not slept—nor could he sleep now—and in the early morning he wandered forth to seek rest for his perturbed brain, in the coolness of the morning air, and the freshness and verdure of the park. On the way he met one of the purveyors of the household, who had arrived with a meagre supply of sea-fish.

"Is this all!" cried Vatel, overcome with despair at the sight.

"It is all," was the reply.

And Vatel went back to his room with death at his heart. To the fiasco of the roast had now succeeded the disaster of the fish. He could not survive the disgrace, and so threw himself upon his sword.

And after all, the fish arrived, sea-fish from the Norman coast; fresh fish from the rivers; fish enough and to spare, in ample time for the table, but too late to save the chef. The Prince wept bitter tears over his body—as much for the cook as for the man—for his loss was irreparable.

And the event cast a certain seriousness over the entertainment. The King had something handsome to say about the departed chef, and, at all the tables, the event was discussed. Some praised the delicate sense of honour and the courage that preferred death to loss of reputation. Others, and these chiefly the gourmands, questioned whether it was right for a cook, any more than a soldier, to desert his post on the eve of battle; for one who kills himself deserts his service. While others, drawing a practical moral from the circumstances, may have said:

"Are you in despair? Do not kill yourself; perhaps your fish will arrive after all."

In the park of Chantilly, one of the noticeable features is the large mansion called the Château d'Enghien, a kind of dower house to the more famous Chantilly. Neither Condé nor d'Enghien, it may be noted, is native to the soil; they represent domains somewhere over the borders, acquired centuries ago by the marriage of an ancestor with the heiress of a Duke of Luxembourg.

None, since the great Condé, has done much to render these titles illustrious; but that of Duc d'Enghien will always be associated with the tragedy of Vincennes, when the unhappy youth who bore that title was kidnapped and shot by Napoleon. It was a tragedy that practically put an end to the house of Condé, for the last holder of the title was a childless recluse, whose only occupation was that of hunting among his forests and chases, and who finally put an end to the tedium of life by hanging himself in his bedroom. By his will, this last of the Condés bequeathed the domain of Chantilly to his kinsman the Duc d'Aumale, a younger son of Louis Philippe, the soldier of the family, who was then winning his spurs in Algeria. But some of the wealth of the Condés was bequeathed to one Madame Sophie Dawes.

The Duc d'Aumale has recently returned to Chantilly, after a short spell of exile, and exile from Chantilly must be indeed a penance. The great Condé, when the King intimated that he wanted to buy Chantilly, replied:

"It must be as your Majesty wishes; but at least grant me the favour of leaving me here as your bailiff."

And Chantilly seems to have exercised the same charm on all who possessed it. There must be somewhere about its pleasant shades one of those marvellous springs of which, if one drinks, he loses all desire to pass elsewhere.

But the rest of the world has to move on; and the railroad takes us to Compiègne, which lies higher up this valley of the Oise, so richly decked with woodland and forest. And this of Compiègne is something like a forest, with miles and miles of grassy rides, and here and there

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an ancient oak concealed in its inmost depths, with a hamlet here and there, or an old church almost deserted and covered with ivy and lichen. Roman prefects hunted in the forest, and grim Carlovingian Kings. Who can say what treasures the forest conceals, what spoils of Roman villa or Gothic palace lie hidden under the mould and moss that has gathered over them age after age?

But a forest is an affair that it takes some time to make the acquaintance of. One ought to live by its side, to share its secrets, to make a companion of it, to find out the old wells and springs, the little chapel hidden in the brake where the peasants still make their offerings, the sacred oak where they come sometimes in their trouble to put up a candle for the safety of a dying friend; to know the pools where the beasts of the forest come to drink; to hear the joyous sound of the horns and the crash of music from the hounds; to see the gay piqueur, his gold lace gleaming through the trees, and the horsemen, and more especially the horsewomen, galloping madly up and down the forest rides. If these delights can move you, then take up your quarters somewhere about the forest of Compiègne. And for the passing visitor there are pleasant walks by the river, with stately avenues that lead to the stately palace of Compiègne. And you may think of the brilliant days of the Second Empire, and the gay hunting-parties that every season enjoyed the splendid hospitality of Napoleon and Eugénie.

The little town of Compiègne still preserves some of its mediæval features—its crumbling old walls, with patches of moat, where tanners have set up their pits, and a fine old Gothic church. You may trace out the spot where Joan of Arc was taken prisoner. It was just on the other side of the old bridge, now pulled down. The Maid had headed a sortie against the Duke of Burgundy's men, who were besieging the town. She was the last to retreat, and the narrow bridge being choked by the crowd of townsfolk pressing across, poor Joan was taken prisoner by an archer and taken to John of Luxembourg, who sent her to the English, as a valuable prize.

But Compiègne, perhaps, is a little triste, and most people would prefer to take train across the forest to pretty, lively little Pierrefonds, where you may drink the sulphur waters if you please, in very pleasant company. And there is a castle, too, at Pierrefonds — a grand, feudal castle—once an imposing ruin, with its grand shattered towers and keep. But the late Emperor Napoleon was persuaded to have the castle completely restored—and the result is a perfect reproduction of the old feudal stronghold; and although, perhaps, it lacks the interest of an untouched relic of antiquity, yet it presents a bold and imposing appearance as it dominates the town, with its eight strong towers, each one hundred and twenty feet high.

The original castle, which belonged to the Duke of Orleans, was once taken by the English under old Talbot. And later, during the Wars of the League, it was occupied by a soldier-adventurer named Rieux, who, encouraged by the lawless state of the country, made of it a regular robbers' hold, whence he levied contributions all round. The castle was well provided with artillery, and sustained a regular siege more than once, when its walls—eighteen feet thick — defied the puny artillery of the period. The brigand just missed carrying off the King himself in an ambuscade. But he was himself entrapped — while plundering a passing cavalcade — and was forthwith hung at Compiègne. Again, under the succeeding monarch — Louis the Thirteenth — one Villeneuve defended the castle against all comers, including the King himself. Again the castle was besieged, and with a regular train of artillery; and the grand old walls at last began to crumble over the heads, or under the feet, of their defenders. It was then time to capitulate, and seek the King's pardon. And from that time the castle fell into decay, till, at last, it was restored, as has already been said, and that by one of the most talented and learned architects of his age—Viollet le Duc — who has given some pleasant sketches of his work in his "History of a Fortress."

And now it only remains to retrace our way through the forest and await the train that brings a crowd of travellers from Namur and Liége, and distant regions beyond, even as far as Cologne, upon the Rhine-stream; travellers who think themselves almost arrived, now that they have reached Compiègne, although we have still a good many miles to accomplish before we see the gleaming lights of Paris.

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JOGIS AND JOGAISM.

THE Jogis of India are one of the classes that most strike the European visitor, and usually with loathing and pity. In some respects the Jogi is analogous to the Christian anchorite of the Middle Ages; but there is a difference. The Christian anchorite sought seclusion from the world in order to humble himself, oppressed with a feeling of unworthiness; the Indian fanatic rather seeks to exalt himself by his privations, and to make profit out of bodily suffering.

Without entering here into the complex subject of Caste, it may be said that Siva-worship is one of the two chief religions of India. Siva is at once the Destroyer and Reproducer, and his worshippers are divided into thirteen chief sects, one of which is the class of devotees called Jogis, which includes a great variety of fanatics, from the speechless mystic to the travelling juggler. Siva is the least attractive of the Hindu deities, and is, indeed, rather a repulsive, dreadful sort of a being, so that he is worshipped more probably through fear than love. Most of the Siva sects are ascetics.

The Jogis are a class of religious mendicants — the name signifying "one who meditates." Among Hindus, meditation is considered as the most sacred of religious duties. Jogis profess to be descended from men who, in old times, had great influence with the people. In the Hindu Scriptures various methods are taught by which a state of perfection is to be attained by concentrating attention, until the spirit of man becomes at one with the Supreme Spirit. There are eighty-four different postures prescribed, in which a Jogi may sit, to fix his eye on the tip of his nose and meditate on Siva. When the condition of complete abstraction is reached, then the Scriptures describe how the Jogis will be able to make themselves lighter than the lightest, and heavier than the heaviest substances; to magnify or lessen their forms at will; to instantaneously traverse immense distances; to reanimate corpses by breathing their own spirit into them; to render themselves invisible; and to know the past, present, and future at a glance.

Such are the Jogis in the abstract. Let us take a look at some of them as they are in the concrete.

The visitor to India will find his views on Jogaism apt to be greatly confused by the variety of types he may come across. He may find the well-nourished and worldly-wise saints encamped in the neighbourhood of a town or large village, doing a thriving business by exchanging presents with the ignorant tradespeople—the exchange being pretty much like old lamps for new—that is to say, the advantage of the exchange always being with the Jogi. The sanctified trifles bestowed by the saints, however, are treasured in countless households, where their beatific influence is never doubted. A flower, a mango, a piece of cocoanut—anything bestowed by a Jogi of eminence in his profession, will bring good-fortune to the recipient; act as a charm against evil, and a talisman against sickness.

If this class does not impress the European favourably, he is not likely to be drawn by the extreme fanatics—the living skeletons who go about almost naked, save for the layers of dirt and ashes with which they are encrusted. The traveller may, perhaps, see one seated in the midst of five fierce fires: four burning around him and the sun beating directly upon him. Or he may see another standing in some out-of-the-way place, with uplifted rigid arm, constantly erect; or another with hands so tightly closed that the nails have penetrated the flesh, and will never be extricated in life.

These are not pleasant pictures; but yet if the Jogis do exceed the Christian anchorites in ingenuity and patience of self-torture, it is to be remembered that in the eyes of devout Hindus, they are both saints and philosophers. There is a disposition among educated Hindus to reject the pretensions of the Jogis; but it is not so much through disbelief in the reality of "Jog-science," as in the ability of degenerate man to act up to it.

But the teeming millions of ignorant Hindus have an unfaltering faith in the power of the Jogi, and a profound veneration for him largely blended with fear.

But, as Professor Oman of Lahore says in a recent work on Indian life, let us not turn away from the Jogi with contemptuous indifference on account of his preposterous pretensions. Naked, emaciated, and covered with ashes though he may be, he represents an important idea. In the grovelling world of polytheistic India, he stands forth a bold and ever-present asserter of man's inherent dignity and exalted position in the universe. Before

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the multitude cowering in abject terror at the altars of hideous and terrible idols, he appears as an embodiment of the belief that man, even though he be degraded and trammelled by his fleshly garment, can, by his own exertions, raise himself to divine heights of knowledge and power.

The Jogi is also highly interesting as a living exemplification of the attitude, since time immemorial, of the Indian mind towards life and Nature; of the world-weariness which has oppressed the East since ages before the dawn of European history, and has caused her sons to fly from the struggles and pleasures of life to the quiet retreat of a jungle, and to seek, in a living death, an escape from the disquieting, and, to them, unbearable activity of thought itself.

India is a land of anchorites, and all who practise austerities are not Jogis. Neither have all who claim the title a proper right to it. For Jogaism is a recognised system of Hindu philosophy, the text-book of which is the Joga Satra, which has been translated into English by Doctor Rajendra Lala Mitra. This teaches how by contemplation, posturing, the suspension of the breath, and other practices, the ascetic may disengage his soul from its gross environment, and be able to attain a full knowledge of the past and the future, and of the very thoughts of his fellow-men. Unlimited power over man and Nature is promised to the successful Jogis. No wonder, then, there are so many practitioners, even although the way to perfection is painful and laborious.

As for the ethical system of the Jogi, that, as Professor Oman explains, is simple enough. He does not seem to have any duties at all to his fellow-men, although he is required to abstain from certain vices. His object in life is to withdraw as far as possible from human society, its business, troubles, and aspirations, and to deliberately suppress every human faculty he possesses. The world may go as it pleases while the Jogi tries to lose himself in the Universal Spirit. He shuts his eyes to the sensible world around him, and expects to receive universal knowledge from idle self-contemplation.

Here are some of the rules of practice laid down for the would-be Jogi:

"Place the left foot upon the right thigh, and the right foot upon the left thigh; hold with the right hand the right great toe, and with the left hand the left great toe, with the hands coming from behind the back and crossing each other; rest the chin on the interclavicular space, and fix the sight on the tip of the nose.

. . . .

"Inspire through the left nostril, fill the stomach with the inspired air by the act of deglutition, suspend the breath, and then expire through the right nostril. Next inspire through the right nostril, swallow the inspired air, suspend the breath, and finally expire through the left nostril.

. . . .

"Be seated in a tranquil posture, and fix your sight on the tip of the nose for the space of ten minutes.

"Close the ears with the middle fingers, incline the head a little to the right side, and listen with each ear attentively to the sound produced by the other ear, for the space of ten minutes.

"Pronounce, inaudibly, twelve thousand times, the mystic syllable 'Om,' and meditate upon it daily after deep inspirations.

"After a few forcible inspirations, swallow the tongue, and thereby suspend the breath, and deglutate the saliva for two hours.

"Listen to the sounds within the right ear, abstractedly, for two hours with the left ear.

"Repeat the mystic syllable 'Om' twenty million seven hundred and thirty-six thousand times in silence, and meditate upon it.

"Suspend the respiratory movements for the period of twelve days, and you will be in a state of Samadhi."

. . . .

"Samadhi" is trance, and professors of hypnotism will appreciate some of the directions above given. Bodily contortion, gazing on the tip of the nose, and meditation upon a meaningless syllable, are the most favourite methods pursued by Jogis. But others adopt habits and practices too loathsome to be mentioned here, although Europeans in India get accustomed to the repulsive sights.

Marvellous stories are told of the performances of Jogis. There is one of the Jogi Haridas, which is vouched for by several eye-witnesses still living. It is said that he attained Samadhi in the presence of the Maharajah Runjeet Singh and his Court, and was, in their presence, buried in a garden outside the city of Lahore. Forty days he lay in the grave,

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over which a constant watch night and day was kept. At the end of forty days, the body was exhumed—cold, stiff, and, to all appearance, dead. Warmth was applied to the head, and friction to the body; air was forced gently into the lungs; and by-and-by the Jogi arose, alive once more. As to whether this was a trick or an actual trance, opinions differ; but it is the fact, we believe, that this particular Jogi had long practised the art of suspending animation, and had shown considerable proficiency in it on other occasions. But Haridas was a "bad lot," and eventually became a fugitive from justice.

The system, some of the rules for practice of which we have given above, is known as the Hatha Jog system. But there is also the Raj Jog system, by which the same end is professed to be attained without physical torture, and by the mere exercise of self-control and meditation.

Even in this milder system, however, the eye has to be kept fixed on the tip of the nose.

A living exponent of the Raj Jog philosophy is a Madras Jogi, by name, Sabhapaty Swami, who has issued a book on the subject. He lays down a set of rules, by the observance of which is attained a gradual extinction of all the human faculties, and senses, and desires. These rules include a series of arguments addressed separately to each of the faculties, long-continued meditation with closed eyes in a secluded place, and so forth.

This Madras Jogi is an adept who professes to have flown through the air to Kailas, the celestial mountain, and there to have beheld the great god, Siva, employed in Joga practices.

This profession is not so extravagant as that of others. In Doctor George Smith's "Life of Doctor Wilson," for instance, the following incident is related:

"Wolff went with Wilson to see one of the celebrated Jogis, who was lying in the sun in the street, the nails of whose hands were grown into his cheek, and a bird's nest upon his head. Wolff asked him:

"'How can one obtain the knowledge of God?'

"He replied:

"'Do not ask me questions. You may look at me, for I am God!'"

Compare this with the account of the most extraordinary of all the Christian ascetics and body-torturers, Saint Simeon Stylites, in "The Book of Days," or in Tennyson's poem:

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one shingle and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of Saintdom, and to clamour, mourn, and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer.

But our object is not to discuss the Joga philosophy—merely to explain and illustrate it. That it must require an immense amount of faith, or fear, or hope, or something, to follow, will be evident from the frightful bodily suffering which attends its pursuit. And there are honest and sincere Jogis—thousands of them—who try to act up to the rules of practice, and to make themselves as unlike human beings as possible.

But there are also countless impostors, whom it is almost impossible for the European to distinguish from the genuine devotee. Here is a story of one, which went the round of the Indian papers not very long ago:

"A Jogi predicted that, on a certain important occasion, an idol would emerge from the ground at Bithooria, in Jodhpore. In due time, an idol did rise gradually above the surface of the ground, and immediately became an object of worship to tens of thousands, who flocked to lay their offerings before the god who had thus miraculously made his appearance in the world. The place was taken under the Maharajah's protection and yielded a considerable revenue, though not for long, as the idol retreated into the earth as slowly and mysteriously as it had come forth. The explanation of the mystery was that the Jogi had digged a deep, narrow pit, and filled it almost to the brim with 'gram,' on the top of which he placed the idol, and covered it up. He then allowed a sufficient supply of water to reach the gram, which, in swelling in the narrow pit, raised the idol above the ground. When the gram afterwards dried and rotted, the idol subsided with it, and gradually disappeared from the gaze of the worshippers."

There are tricks in all trades—even in asceticism; but yet Jogaism is a remarkable force in India, and so well suited to the character of the people that it will probably exist for many generations to come, in spite of the spread of Western ideas.

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LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

BOOK FOUR.

TOLD BY AUNT DACIE.

CHAPTER I. ON THE BORDERLAND.

IT seems that, as I began this story of ours, so I am to finish it: a harder task than was the telling of the story of Lucille, that sad, sweet story, the memory of which still lingers with me as the refrain of some sweet old song that haunts both heart and ear.

As I look back, trying to gather up the threads of the past that I may weave them into the warp and woof of my narrative, such a flood of bitter, cruel memories, such a record of dark and desolate days rise up before me, that I am almost too bewildered to pick and choose among them all.

But one clear light plays on all; like a ray of sunlight brightening a stormy sea, and that is—Dumphie.

Have you forgotten, you who so far have followed this story, how, when Lucille lay dead, and Mazie lay in her cradle-nest, Dumphie caught his father round the legs, and cried — when all the rest of us were dumb, choking with grief, knowing not what to say—and cried out, between the sobs:

"We will be very good to you, Papa Birt, now that mother is gone away!"

Well, it has been like that all the time. Dumphie has been "very good" to us every one; he has been our prop and stay, our help and comfort; he whom I once—shame upon me for a cross-grained old woman!—set myself up against as a drawback (one of four) to my dear brother's marriage. Dumphie has avenged himself a hundred times over—and how unconsciously, too, dear fellow! — upon me for those days of ignorance and prejudice.

The worst of Dumphie is this: all he does is done so much as a matter of course that you dare not say a word, whatever you may feel, to show that you think it anything out of the common way. He is the hardest person to thank that I know. If you begin he just puckers up his mouth as if he were going to whistle, and a little fold of annoyance shows between his eyebrows; and you—well, you give a little cough, and let on that you weren't going to speak at all. The best way with Dumphie is to love him very much, and to keep silence—I mean in the way of trying to show him how grateful you feel. Mazie and I are quite adepts in both ways by this time. It was Dumphie who went with Louis to the coroner's inquest on that poor woman who died so sadly; Dumphie who took him home to the prison afterwards; who waited during the terrible interview he had with his wife, and—— but I am getting on too fast. I have had no opportunity yet of saying what I think and feel about Louis Draycott. I am glad to be able to say something on my own account; to say how I love, honour, and trust him; and how I shall always feel that it must be a privilege to know such a man, even at the cost of all the suffering that came to us through knowing him.

Truly to love such a man is for a woman a "liberal education;" and I could not but say Amen, when, in a very dark hour indeed, my precious child said to me:

"I would rather have loved him, Aunt Dacie, and lost him as I have, than been the wife of any other."

As to the woman Rebecca, I am not going to deny that it cost me something to write down in black and white those two words—"Louis' wife." The first time I had to do it was when I wrote to his sister Ella, whose husband, Captain Marchmont, of the Royal Artillery, had been ordered on Indian service some while before we got to know Louis well, and who had to be written to out there in that far country whither she had gone, and told of the strange tragedy that had come about in her brother's life and Mazie's. So I have got used to writing those fatal words by this time; better still, I have got used to thinking them—used to setting facts clearly and plainly before myself, shirking nothing.

The noble example Louis set us in this way was like the power of a great leader to make his men follow on. It was irresistible. And at last I found myself—reluctantly at first, and greatly against my will—taking some interest in the woman Rebecca, falling into his way of looking at things, even preaching to myself as to the duty he still owed to her, in spite of the black record that lay between them.

It was harder to convince Kezia of the justness of things. She called Rebecca a

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"baggage," and was really quite unmanageable, banging the crockery-ware about in such a fashion that I really began to fear we shouldn't have a whole dish in the place. Then she would burst into tears at prayers, and smite her hands together like those people who "keen" at Irish wakes, which I thought hard upon Dumphie. He, however, always read on, just as if that were quite the usual way for people to behave at family prayers. And once I saw Mazie kiss Kezia at the head of the kitchen stairs afterwards, patting her shoulder, as though trying to comfort her.

Just fancy it now! Mazie, the girl whose heart was riven; whose life's love was rent and torn; whose dear lover was about to leave her and journey into a far country to return, it might be, no more; she herself, dry-eyed, calm, patient under it all, trying to comfort the poor old creature, whose warm, North-country heart was breaking to see her nursling's trouble!

"'Twas me as helped her first step across t'floor, and she settin' her little foot down so dainty, and staggerin' and laughin' and laughin' and staggerin', right across from Miss Charlotte's sofy to the crook-legged table there by t'window—and the darlin' hould o' no more o' me than a wee bit o' my cotton skirt! When you and Miss Charlotte clapped your hands to see her so clever, she got scared, the pretty one! and hid hersel' oop i' my big apron. As well she might—wi' them four boys—the varmints!—plannin' all the walks they'd take her—and she but just took her first step across t' floor. My sakes! but her pretty feet have led her a sad journey of it sin' then, and brought her to a sorry pass — thanks to them as ought to be ashamed to find theirsen's above ground."

I had to listen to all this, and more like it; but it really did not tend to cheer me, or keep me up, and I could only be thankful that Kezia kept a quieter tongue in her head to Mazie, than she did to me.

I was, however, terrified as to what her comments might be, when we heard of the death of the girl whom Rebecca had—in her sudden rage and anger—stabbed in the chest. But I think even Kezia felt that things were closing in too black and terrible all around us for words to be wise. At all events, she said little; as, to say the truth, did we all.

It was like the breathless waiting in the intervals of a storm for the next flash and roar, the time we spent between the coming of that news and the day of the coroner's inquest.

Mazie had a great longing to be with Louis at so trying a time; but both he and Dumphie were resolute. They said we should have news of the verdict as promptly as possible. There are many acts in life's drama in which men take the active part, while women have just to wait and possess their souls in patience as best they can.

The day of the inquest was a time of dreadful tension, during which Mazie and I kept silence even with each other. For myself, I could not get out of my mind Louis Draycott's face as he left us the night before. There was something so wan, so weary; such a strange, unseeing look in the tender, mournful eyes! We had been speaking, he and I, of our darling's visit to the prison, and her interview with Rebecca. Louis had told me how the power that dwells in weakness had struck him as so wonderful; how the slender girl, just because she went upon her mission in the divine spirit of love, had touched and softened the hardened heart; had, as it were, changed the whole personality of the woman in whom all tenderness had apparently died—all womanliness been worn away.

After Louis had been speaking of her he began muttering to himself in short, disjointed sentences, seemingly unconscious of my presence; and when I went up to him and laid my hand upon his arm, he started, passed his hand over his brow, and said hurriedly:

"My head swims to-night, Aunt Dacie. I am all in a haze. I think I had better get home."

Just then Mazie came back into the room again, and he told her he was going. Then he took her in his arms, laid his hand upon her head, pressing it to his bosom, kissed her on the forehead, and said very solemnly:

"God bless and keep you, my darling!"

I don't think Mazie noticed anything strange about him, and I dare not say how troubled I was. The girl had enough to bear without my making things worse for her; and I always was a fidget. Towards midday a messenger arrived from Dumphie, and we knew the worst had happened. The jury had returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against Louis Draycott's wife.

"I must go down to the City; but will get home as soon as possible. Louis will be with you later on. Take care of the child."

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So ran Dumphie's letter to me. Mazie read it over my shoulder. Things were too bad with us now for there to be any use in trying to keep things back.

She was very pale and quiet all the afternoon, often walking to the window and looking down the sunlit street.

Once she said:

"We shall have to help Louis more than ever now, Aunt Dacie; there will be so much to be done. His friend, Mr. Grey, promised some days ago to undertake the case and plead for Rebecca, if it came to a trial for murder. You see, both Louis and I know her innocence of the greater crime so well. Oh, the poor soul! how will she live through to-day? How I wish I were beside her to comfort her!"

"I'm glad you're not," thought I stubbornly to myself. With her spirit eyes and her slender form, that had grown more slender still in these latter days, she did not look fit to go through much more trial; and yet—and yet, was not the worst still to come?

That day seemed terribly long. The opposite houses cast their shadow over the street; our tea came in and remained untasted. Kezia went out on an errand and came in like a whirlwind. They had got "all about it" printed in ever so big letters on big sheets of paper held down by stones at the side of the pavement in the thoroughfare hard by, for every fool to stand and gape at, and "please, Miss Dacie, for gracious' sake, don't let Miss Margaret out of this blessed house lest she ketch a sight on't."

Of what use to try and explain to Kezia that "Miss Margaret" had reached that plain of exalted feeling and of strained emotion, where such details seem but trifles light as air?

About six Dumphie's latchkey in the lock brought us both downstairs from my little room.

"Where is Draycott?" he said, looking straight at Mazie's white face.

"Not here," I said quickly, speaking for her. "We have had no word of any kind from Louis."

Mazie looked at her brother as a child might look to its mother for help. Dumphie had never failed her. He would not fail her now.

He looked hot and tired, and I saw him give a glance at the tea-things on the table—seen through the open door.

I flew to the bell.

"Let me get some fresh tea for you, Dumphie, this has stood too long; Kezia will not be a minute making it."

For I knew he was going, even before he reached out his hand for the hat he had only just before hung upon the stand.

"I cannot stay now, I must go to Louis at once. I will bring him back with me."

He caught and held Mazie a moment, and was gone.

"Aunt Dacie, has it turned cold, this evening? or is it—only my fancy?" said the child, when the light was fading, and the lamp-lighter had kindled a feeble jet in each of the two lamps that adorn our street.

I saw her shiver as she spoke, and I went upstairs and fetched Sister Charlotte's knitted shawl—the one she made with her own hands, and which is almost as soft and fine as a spider's web—and wrapped it about Mazie, till she looked like a great cocoon.

It was just two hours since Dumphie left us, for eight was chiming from Mr. Candytuft's church hard by; and yet we might have been keeping watch and ward for his return through the gloom and chill of a long night, so unnerved were the two of us.

And, at last, Dumphie came to us.

Only Dumphie, with a strange look upon his face, a flush upon his cheek, and his eyes full of a new trouble.

He went straight up to Mazie, who stood, pale and silent, by the window whence she had been keeping watch; he laid his hands upon her shoulders, not caressingly — caresses weaken at such a moment—but as one man might do to another in an hour of trial; he looked straight into her eyes, she into his—breathless, eager, waiting — and for a moment there was silence. Then Dumphie spoke:

"My little sister," he cried—and, oh, the heart-breaking calm and tenderness of his dear voice!—"you have been so brave — so brave — through all this sad, sad time; you must be braver than ever, now. I—found Louis: but—he did not know me. Come—I will take you to him."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND
A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 30.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 27, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XV. AN EXPERIMENT.

A FEW evenings after Clement's visit to Mrs. Butterworth, a few friends were being entertained at the Rectory, of whom Maud and Brownie, accompanied by Mr. Litton, were the last to arrive.

"You are the very girl for our purpose, Maud," said the hostess. "These young folks have been trying all sorts of mysterious experiments: willing, thought-reading, I don't know what. But they cannot find any one to take them seriously enough."

"Then," interposed Henry Grayson, "if you want to keep your thoughts to yourself, you ought to laugh."

"Now, Maud, we all know that you are above any such weakness, aren't you?" continued Mrs. Butterworth.

"Mr. Anderson," said Brownie, "this is grand news about the hospital. I only heard it this afternoon. Have you really accepted the post? I do congratulate you. Who could have given all that money?"

Anderson seemed pleased enough at her congratulation; but, in common with everybody else, he was expectantly waiting to see whether Maud would consent to be blindfolded.

Very pretty she looked, standing there in her black dress, with a white handkerchief bound over her eyes; and presently it fell to Anderson's lot to lead her from the room. During her absence a certain porcelain vase full of rose-leaves was fixed upon; and this having been placed in an out-of-the-way corner, Maud's business was to lead Anderson to it, guided only by such unconscious indications as might be afforded by his touch.

"Oh, I am too stupid!" she exclaimed, after one or two unfruitful attempts. "I suppose I ought to feel an impulse to touch something; but I don't in the least. Please, some one else try," and, raising her arms, she began to unfasten the handkerchief which blinded her.

Some one else did try, and, emboldened by success, suggested a still more venturesome experiment in the direction of mesmerism.

"Well," said Mr. Butterworth, "let us have a thought of more fleshly things first; then we must see what Anderson can do for us. He is the authority on mesmerism, you know. Anderson, will you take Miss Northcott?"

Mrs. Butterworth, who was, of course, at heart a matchmaker, had had another partner in view for Anderson; but he had already taken Maud to the supper-room. Brownie herself was disappointed, having looked forward to this opportunity for a little private chat with the Doctor.

"You are the only person who has not congratulated me, Miss Northcott," said Anderson, when they were seated.

"Congratulated you?" she answered, with a start. "Oh, you mean about the hospital; it is not a matter for much congratulation, is it?"

"Too insignificant, you think? Well, of course, it is a small matter altogether. Yet it means a great deal to me."

She understood all that his last words implied; she understood perfectly.

"You think you will like the work?" she asked.

"Like it? I love it. I hoped at one time to have devoted my life to it, until

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circumstances occurred to thwart my designs. It is the best piece of good fortune that has come my way for a long time. I shall begin to think my lucky star has begun to shine at last. Miss Northcott," he added, softly; "who knows what one may hope for some day?"

When the men re-entered the drawing-room, after a short discussion of mesmerism in general with the Rector, Brownie at once rose from her chair and went straight to Anderson.

"I am going to beg a favour," she began.

"And I also," he answered. "Mr. Butterworth has asked me to attempt a little experiment. He wishes me to try to mesmerise somebody. Now I know you will make an excellent medium. Will you oblige me by submitting your will to mine for a few moments; or, does it sound too dreadful?"

"I don't mind that," she said hastily. "At least, I should not, but——"

"We are all ready, Anderson," cried the Rector, and the guests crowded round to add their persuasion to the Doctor's, wondering to see that Brownie, usually so merry, was the only grave person present.

Seeming to acquiesce, she followed Anderson to a chair in the middle of the room, and, as the rest withdrew to their seats, found an opportunity to whisper:

"Mr. Anderson, you promised to help me if ever an opportunity offered. I claim your promise now. I want you to mesmerise Mr. Litton."

He read her thoughts, and knew how vain was her hope; nevertheless such a wish amounted to a command, and pretending to change his mind, he threw Brownie over and went up to Mr. Litton.

"No, thank you; I'd rather not," said that worthy, in answer to Anderson's request; but, warmly urged by them all, at last he took his place on the chair resigned by Brownie.

Taking from his pocket a small silver watch, Anderson requested Mr. Litton to fix his eyes upon its bright, white case. Amidst perfect silence the medium continued to do this for the space of seven or eight minutes; a distinct change coming slowly over his face. Slipping the watch into his pocket, Anderson for a moment warmed his hands at the gas in the middle of the room, then, once more approaching Mr. Litton, made a few passes downwards from his forehead to his breast.

"He is off now," said Anderson, after raising one of Mr. Litton's eyelids, and, taking from the fireplace a small piece of coal, he placed it on the palm of his hand.

"This is an oyster, eat it," he said, and without the least hesitation the medium did as he was bidden.

"It will not hurt him," Anderson explained, and, placing two chairs side by side, himself sat astride one of them.

"You will take this horse and go for a ride," he said to Mr. Litton, who at once followed the doctor's example, beginning to rise and fall in his imaginary stirrups with amusing gravity.

"Gallop, gallop!" urged Anderson, and leaning forward and squaring his elbows, Mr. Litton used his heels and galloped with a will; or, rather, without one.

"I think that must be enough," said Anderson, and, flicking the other on the cheek, soon restored him to the possession of his senses.

"Have you any recollection of your dreams?" asked the Rector.

Mr. Litton shook his head in bewilderment.

"Have you begun to ride again since your accident?" suggested Anderson.

"Now you mention it; by Jove, I can't have been across a horse!"

"There he stands," laughed the Doctor, pointing to the chair, "cream body, black legs, finely-curved back, graceful action, and rising—five!"

Mr. Litton did not join in the laughter, which followed this sally, with any great heartiness; nor was it deemed necessary to allude to the oyster.

On the way home Brownie and Anderson walked in advance, leaving Maud to follow with her uncle.

"I don't know how to thank you enough," she began, as soon as they had left the house; "the idea occurred to me as soon as I heard the word mesmerism. It is the very thing, Mr. Anderson. I am as confident I shall prove Clement's innocence, as that I am walking here with you."

"I cannot see by what method," he answered.

"Why, by mesmerising him. I am sure I can do it. Don't you think so?"

"Undoubtedly, you might hypnotise Mr. Litton; but what then?"

"Of course, I will make him tell me; I will make him confess before Henry Grayson—before them all. I have found the missing link. I have puzzled for weeks to think of a plan for bringing it home to him; now I have discovered one."

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"I am sorry to destroy your hopes," he said, "but I can show you in a moment how groundless they are. You may not have noticed all my operations. But before ordering Mr. Litton to do anything, I always myself suggested the action by my own movements. Although it appeared that his eyes were closed, in reality they were not entirely shut. He was able to see. You must understand that, during the hypnotic trance, there is a suspension of will power. When a suggestion is made, the hypnotised medium has no power to resist his natural impulse to follow that suggestion. In short, he becomes an involuntary mimic, but so far as my small experience of such matters extends, he has no power of initiation whatever."

"But," persisted Brownie, "surely he would answer questions?"

"I think not," answered Anderson, as they neared Eastwood; "but, if you like, I will send you a book, by Doctor Hiedenhain, on the subject. I think you read German. But, Miss Northcott, pray let me advise you to take no further steps in this matter."

She looked up to his face reproachfully.

"Why not, Mr. Anderson?"

"Have you seen your cousin lately?"

"No," she answered; "is it not strange that two persons can live so close together without meeting? I have not seen him for a fortnight—not since the day of Mrs. Butterworth's fête."

"I have the advantage of you, then. I happened to meet him at the Rectory only two or three days ago. I am afraid you must be prepared for disappointment: Clement intends to leave Middleton immediately, if, indeed, he has not gone already."

His words fell upon her with the force of crushing blows, but, even while she was staggering beneath them, she never once lost sight of the purpose to which her life was consecrated.

She did not answer Anderson; for, what with her new-born hope, and this new disappointment, she dared not trust herself to speak.

She had been so greatly at a loss for a means of bringing home the crime to Mr. Litton. It seemed that nothing short of actual confession would be conclusive. Even the wild idea of bribing him to confess had passed through her mind, only to be put aside with the hundred and one schemes of the past month.

But this evening she had jumped to the conclusion that it would be possible actually to compel the criminal to confess his crime. So possessed was she by this idea, and so exactly did it supply her need, that Anderson's expostulation was wasted.

If Clement had gone——the question was unthinkable, and also seemed to hinder her from thinking of anything else.

Anderson was bidding Maud good-night:

"I will not fail to let you hear from me to-morrow," he whispered, very sympathetically, as Brownie offered her hand; and Maud, overhearing, arrived at the conclusion that matters had progressed farther than she had believed between them.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH BROWNIE IS JEALOUS.

Brownie heard the clock in St. Luke's Church tower strike every hour that night.

She saw Mr. Litton hypnotised again and again; saw herself the complete mistress of his mind; stood by whilst he confessed his sins to Henry Grayson and the rest. But, as the cold, grey dawn replaced the blackness of the night, all such hopeful prospects faded.

What if she were already too late! If Clement had gone away—gone without a word of farewell!

Well, it must be for her to bring him back again. She would stand at nothing now. For what would it profit to meet with the most complete success, if he were not by to reap the benefit? True, she might prove his innocence as well in his absence as in his presence; but he must be at Middleton before he could become Henry Grayson's partner; and unless he became Henry's partner, he would lose the fifty thousand pounds.

His honour was as dear to her as her own; but there was something cold and unsatisfying in the idea of establishing his good name whilst he was not there to see.

Brownie's desire was for something far more dramatic than this. The scene was enacted before her mind's eye, as she lay wide awake after a sleepless night, and the face of each person whom she intended to play a part in it rose up distinctly before her. A beam of sunlight glinted through the mist of the early morning; Clement's troubles disappeared at last; and, if Brownie did not sleep, at least she dreamed happy dreams.

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Determined to put a period to her doubt and anxiety, after breakfast she borrowed Maud's dog-cart, and, excusing herself from taking the groom, drove direct to Clement's lodging in the High Street.

His landlord, the bootmaker, scenting a customer, came from his shop obsequiously bowing.

"Good morning, Mr. Staite, I want to see my cousin, please."

While she spoke, her heart almost stood still; she expected to hear that he had gone away for good.

But no; he was still in Middleton. He had started out about a quarter of an hour ago—at eleven o'clock.

"Do you know which way he went, Mr. Staite?" she asked, actually bursting into a laugh from sheer relief.

"Not exactly, Miss Northcott; but I can tell you where he very often does go, and that's to Mrs. Oliver's up at the Nook."

Brownie's laugh abruptly died away; the mare felt the whip, and, in a few moments was trotting at a good round pace in the direction indicated by Mr. Staite.

The farmyards that she passed looked bright and clean, with their new wheat-ricks; the burnt-up stubble in the fields suggesting that the hunting season was drawing near.

Perhaps Brownie's thoughts were too far away to be properly occupied with the mare; perhaps Kitty soon discovered this, and took her measures accordingly. The sun was shining very fiercely this morning; the mare dropped into a walk; when, upon turning a corner not many hundred yards from the Nook, the panting, throbbing noise of a threshing machine fell upon her ears. Kitty, taken by surprise, entirely lost her head, and, getting the bit between her teeth, began to tear along the road at about sixteen miles an hour.

And now, when it was too late, Brownie bethought herself of her position. She was absolutely powerless; afraid to jump out, scarcely able to grasp the reins, much less to attempt to control the frightened mare. In a minute they were racing past Mrs. Oliver's house, when, to her infinite joy, Brownie caught sight of Clement in the garden.

Hearing the noise of the runaway, he turned on the instant, and running as he had never run before, did his best to overtake her. Anxiety to save Brownie seemed to lend him wings; at last, and only just in time, he was level with the cart; another moment, and Kitty's bridle was in his hand; the next, and she was brought to a standstill.

"You have saved my life, Clement," said Brownie, as he stood panting by her side; and though he ridiculed the suggestion, it was far too pleasant a one to be easily forgotten.

"I must have a word or two to say to this young woman," he said, mounting the cart. "Why ever did they let you come alone, Brownie?"

She humbly gave up the reins; and, taking the box-seat, Clement laid the whip about Kitty's shoulders, and let her go as fast as she pleased.

"You are not in a hurry," he continued. "I shall take you under my charge until luncheon-time. I tell you what, Brownie, now I have got you, I have a good mind to drive right on for ever and ever, and keep you by my side always."

She answered by a short, embarrassed little laugh.

"Auntie never likes us to be late for luncheon, Clement," she said, demurely. "How hot you are making Kitty."

"She won't want to run away again today," he said. "Brownie, promise me you will never come without the groom in the future."

He seemed quite anxious about so insignificant a matter; but to Brownie there was a new pleasure in being thus cared for, and the promise was given very readily. They were approaching a small wayside inn; a pretty, creeper-covered house, with an appearance of sleepy respectability.

"Suppose we give the mare a rub down," suggested Clement; and after a very small amount of persuasion, Brownie consented to enter the smoky parlour, while this operation was in progress.

"I wonder when we shall meet next?" he exclaimed, as he sat on the corner of the wooden table, idly swinging his leg.

"You don't mean that it is true, after all!" she cried. "Oh, Clement! indeed you must not go."

"It is true enough," was the answer. "Brownie, I can't stay; I ought to have gone at the time. Just think what my life has been, and what it still is. Nothing in the world to do——"

"You never used to complain of having nothing to do," she said.

"But it is different now. I have been a fool—worse than foolish. I have thrown away my chance."

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"You will have another chance, Clement," she faltered.

"No, no; it is too late. I am not thinking of the money. I need something that is far beyond price, Brownie. And—sometimes, to add to the pain of it, I tell myself that there might have been a time—— But there," he added, springing to the ground, "that is over and done with. I am going to work at last. But for the merest fluke, I should have been away before now."

"Without even coming to bid me—to bid us good-bye, Clement!"

It did seem hard to her. Nobody knew what she had endured for him; how she had stooped that he might conquer; how she, to whom such subterfuges were odious, had plotted and schemed to take advantage of Mr. Litton's weakness, in order that she might lead him to his own betrayal. Yet Clement spoke of leaving her for years and years, perhaps for ever, and without so much as a word of farewell.

"It is not as though I intended to leave England," he answered; "and as soon as I was out of this place, I should have written to Maud. I should not have left you without my address, Brownie. I mean to enlist in a crack cavalry regiment. In four or five years I reckon to be on my way to a commission, and I swear I will get it, too. For the next few years I shall hide myself; then, one fine day, I shall walk up to Eastwood—Lieutenant Clement Northcott, of Her Majesty's Dragoon Guards. I forgot, though, you will hardly be living at the old house then."

There was a determination in his voice and manner which showed him in a new character. He looked as though he would do as he said.

To her inexperienced mind, enlistment seemed an altogether fatal and irrevocable step.

"Clement," she said, going to his side and looking pitifully into his face, "if you refuse to do what I ask, I shall think, for the first time in my life, that you are unkind to me. It is no use bidding you be hopeful; you will not take any notice of what I say. But I do not ask the favour for your sake, I ask it for my own."

He looked into her tearful eyes and longed to take her to his heart; but to all outward appearance he was more than calm. As he stood there, whistling under his breath, she thought him careless, until he opened his lips to answer her.

"For Heaven's sake don't seek to prolong my agony!" he cried. "Imagine a man condemned to hell and tortured with a glimpse of heaven. The punishment of Tantalus was nothing to mine. But there, you cannot understand. How long do you want me to stay?"

What she really could not understand was his hopelessness. For her part, she regarded his innocence as almost proved. "Only until the fifth of November," she answered.

"Why, that is your birthday. By Jove, you will be one-and-twenty—a woman, able to dispose of yourself and your life as you please."

"Yes," she answered very quietly, "and if you give me your promise to stay until then, it will be my best present for the day."

"I will indulge your whim so far, Brownie. I cannot—upon my life I cannot—say I will stay in Middleton. But I promise that I will not enlist until after the fifth of November. That is the most I can do, and you cannot know what even that will cost me."

Then he went to look after Kitty, who was standing ready for the return journey, fresh and sleek after her grooming; and in a few minutes they were driving—but not so quickly as they had come—towards Eastwood.

"I was so afraid I should be too late, Clement, she said when they had gone some distance from the inn. "Mr. Anderson thought you had already gone. He only told me last night."

"It is the merest chance," he answered. "I happened to go up to the Nook to bid good-bye to Mrs. Oliver——"

This was a bitter drop in Brownie's cup; he had thought of saying farewell to Mrs. Oliver, if not to her!

"And," he continued, unsuspectingly, "she showed me a horse she had just bought. You must know, there is a little story attached to this horse. Captain Oliver—he is an awful brute—objected to her buying it, in the first place; but she likes to have her own way, and bought it in spite of him. Then the brute turned out to be vicious; she dare not mount it, and it has already damaged her groom. Of course, this makes her husband all the more wild; because, you see, he vowed he would sell the horse at once, and now he can't. No doubt she was wrong to buy it; but, by Jove, she has suffered for it. Brownie, I believe that blackguard struck her; I saw the

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mark on her shoulder, at dinner last night——"

"I thought Captain Oliver was away," she said, quickly; "Uncle Walter told me so."

"Oh, yes," answered Clement, carelessly; "but I dined there last night——"

"And you were calling again this morning!"

"Wait a moment, and you shall hear all about it. I am wandering from the point. When I called to say good-bye, and saw this brute of a horse, I offered to try my hand at breaking it for her; but it had a sore heel, and could not be ridden for a few days. The consequence was that I agreed to stay on, and that is how I happened to meet you this morning."

"Then, Clement, you put off going away with the greatest readiness to gratify a mere whim of Mrs. Oliver's; but when I want you to do the same for me, I have to implore you to stay as a favour, and then meet only with partial success."

Brownie was really vexed now, albeit Mrs. Oliver was the principal object of her wrath.

"No, no!" exclaimed Clement, looking very straight at Kitty's ears. "I did not stay only to please Mrs. Oliver. Partly to please her, of course; or, rather, to help her. Don't you see, I want to put her in the right—so far as I can—with her husband. I want to show that the horse is to be ridden; and you know that I shall enjoy reducing him to submission. I went up last night only to see whether he was ready for his lesson, and arranged to be there at half-past eleven this morning. I don't know what she will think has become of me. I was on the point of taking her hand, when I heard your wheels, and away I rushed without a word."

"Clement," said Brownie, as he pulled Kitty up a few yards from Mrs. Northcott's house, "you will remember your promise. You are not to enlist until after the fifth of November."

This, to Brownie, was equivalent to never.

"And then, I suppose, I may go to the ends of the earth," he answered, as he put the reins in her hand.

"Yes," she said, nodding a farewell, "to the ends of the earth," and she began to smile once more.

"And no one will care a rap!" he cried despondently, as he watched her drive into the garden.

SOME PHENOMENA OF MEMORY.

THE varieties of memory are as remarkable as its vagaries. There is, for instance, so wide a range between Niebuhr, the great statesman, and a certain Divine, that one can scarcely recognise the same faculty in each. It is said of Niebuhr that he remembered everything he had read at any period of his life; and it is said of the Reverend Doctor that he forgot he had been married within an hour or two of the interesting event.

John Wesley had a remarkable memory; and at eighty-five, even, it was still vigorous. Andrew Fuller could repeat a poem of five hundred lines after hearing it read once or twice, could recite verbatim a sermon or speech, and enumerate the names of the shop-signs from the Temple to the end of Cheapside, with a description of the principal articles displayed in each shop-window.

Before the days of shorthand reporting, "Memory Woodfall" used to attend the House of Commons, and, after listening to a debate, would reproduce the whole without taking a single note. The same power was possessed by William Radcliffe, the husband of Mrs. Radcliffe the novelist.

Both Macaulay and Sir Walter Scott had prodigious memories, yet neither of them could compare with Beronicius of Middleburgh, who knew by heart the works of Virgil, Cicero, Juvenal, Homer, Aristophanes, and the two Plinys. If this was an example of "rote" only, we have in Mezzofanti, the celebrated linguist of Bologna, one of the most striking instances on record of what, by way of distinction, we may call intelligent memory. He was described by Lord Byron as "a walking polyglot, a master of languages, and a Briareus of parts of speech." At the age of fifty he was thoroughly versed in fifty languages—perfect in pronunciation, idiom, grammar and colloquialisms—and before his death he added twenty or thirty more to his list. He used to say himself that he never forgot anything that he either heard or read.

As an example of effort to create memory by artificial means, the case of Robert Pasfield, an illiterate Puritan, may be recalled. He had the taste of his time for sermons, but could himself neither read nor write. He invented a long leather girdle, which he wound twice about his body, and upon which he preserved an

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accurate Biblical record. The girdle was divided into parts to represent the books of the Bible in their order; for the chapters he affixed small thongs of leather to the different divisions, and by other points he indicated the verses in each chapter. By means of this "Girdle of Verity,"' as it came to be called, the man was able to take such notes of the sermon that on returning home he could give all the heads and quote all the various texts mentioned in it—and the preachers of the day were great in quotation.

And what is Memory? Briefly it may be defined as the impression of the past in the form of latent images in the mind. It is a consciousness apart from the actual consciousness of the present. It is a cerebral record of past experiences, which is more or less quickened by the environment of the moment. The possession of perfect memory implies perfect sanity; for, with the insane, memory is always distorted or disturbed, if it be not wholly lost.

What we call absent-mindedness is temporary suspension of the faculty of memory. The mind, intent upon some present thought, obliterates or obscures the record of the past. We may even regard it as a temporary and partial form of insanity; and if we find absent-mindedness most common with persons of great mental powers, we may accept the fact as another illustration of the near alliance between great genius and madness. Certain it is that Bruyère's "Absent Man" was no mere creature of fertile imagination. The original is said to have been the Count de Brancas, of whom a curious story is related.

One day he was reading by the fire in his study, when the nurse brought him a child newly-born to him. The Count threw away the book, and took the child on his knee to play with it. By-and-by, a visitor was announced, and the Count, forgetting all about the child, and remembering only that he had been reading a book, threw the poor infant carelessly on to the table. What a mercy he didn't throw it into the fire!

It is recorded of La Fontaine, noted for his absent-mindedness, that he once attended the funeral of one of his most intimate friends, and shortly afterwards called to visit that friend. When reminded by the astonished servant of the recent death, he was at first terribly shocked, and then remarked: "True; of course, I recollect now I went to his funeral."

To come back to memory, however, we may find a more scientific definition. It is the faculty which the psychical organism has of reviving as a mental representation an impression of sense formerly experienced. It is combined with imagination, and it is the common source of reproduction and recollection. But recollection must have also recognition to become memory. How, then, is it that we only remember some of our past experiences, thoughts, observations, impressions, and general mental pictures? If memory is only reproduction and recollection, why does it not reflect everything which has flitted across the brain in the past? Because the faculty of memory is also associated with the faculty of will.

Schopenhauer states the matter thus: "If we consider the thing deeply, we shall arrive at the result that memory in general needs the support of a will, as of a point of attachment, or rather of a thread on which the memories are strung, and which holds them together; or that the will is the ground to which individual memories cleave, and without which they could not endure, and that, therefore, for a merely knowing, quite will-less being, memory cannot be conceived."

More recent writers, in the light of evolution, and moved by various scientific theories, have questioned, qualified, extended, and amplified Schopenhauer's definition; but it is quite sufficient for our purpose. What we want now to do, is merely to trace some phenomena of memory.

And first, what is the operation of the memory in sleep? It is common to think of sleep as forgetfulness—more or less blissful; but forgetting is of two kinds: it may be either partial, with the possibility of reproduction without recollection, or complete, when neither reproduction nor recollection will revive the impression. And it is a remarkable fact that we often recall in our sleep that which we have forgotten in our waking moments.

A curious instance of memory in sleep is related by a French writer on Dreams. He says he once saw in a dream a number of men passing out from a feast. He observed them all very attentively, and the face of one struck him so much, that he remembered it after waking. Exercising his thoughts as to where he had seen the face before, he at last recollected having seen it some days previously in a book of fashions, which he had carelessly glanced at and cast aside.

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The same writer tells that, another time, he saw in a dream a fair young lady in company with his own sister. He thought he knew her; but on awaking, with the image still in his mental visage, he could not recollect her. Falling asleep again, almost immediately, the same lady reappeared, and he recollected in his sleep that he had not recollected her when awake! Surprised, even in his dream, at this, he went up to the lady and asked where he had had the pleasure of making her acquaintance. She at once reminded him by naming a watering-place where they had met; and the whole circumstance came back to him in his sleep, and remained in his memory when he awoke again.

Reichenbach, a German writer on mental phenomena, says:

"Waking, I cannot with whatever effort recall the features of my wife, who died some twenty years ago; but, if I think of her in dream, and her image is represented, I get the same with such accuracy that I have again before me every expression of her fine features in all their loveliness."

And Reichenbach's experience, we venture to think, is by no means exceptional. The present writer has certainly had vivid dream-images of long-departed friends, whose features he can hardly recall when awake, and, doubtless, many of our readers have had similar experiences.

Fichte, a German psychologist, mentions the case of a musician, a good composer, who once omitted to note down a melody which occurred to him. Afterwards, he could not recall it; but later, he recollected it in dream, with full harmony and accompaniment, and on waking, was able to retain it until he wrote it down.

There seems to be practically no limit to the reach of dream-memory into the past, for the scenes of early childhood are frequently reproduced in the very aged. We quote the following example from the Baron du Prel, author of "The Philosophy of Mysticism:"

"A friend of Maury's had been brought up at Montbrison. Five-and-twenty years later he proposed a visit to the scene of his childhood. The night before the journey he was transported in dream to Montbrison, and he was there met by a gentleman who introduced himself as H. T., and as a friend of his father's. As a child he had seen this person, but recollected no more about him than the name. Now, when he actually got to Montbrison, he was much astonished to meet there the gentleman he had seen in the dream, whose features, however, were somewhat altered."

This latter circumstance shows that this dream-figure was merely a recollection from youth.

There are endless stories of the hiding-places of missing deeds, and so forth, being revealed in dreams. Let us take one as typical.

A landed proprietor in England was involved in a lawsuit in consequence of a claim upon his father's estate, which he was firmly convinced had been discharged. Judgement, however, was about to go against him, as no voucher could be found. But one night, in dream, his father appeared to him, and said that the papers relating to this affair had been placed in the hands of a solicitor he had not generally employed, but who happened to be engaged for this particular business. In the dream the father said that if this person had forgotten a matter which was already rather old, he would be reminded of it by the mention of a Portuguese gold coin, concerning the value of which there was a dispute at the time. The dream was curiously verified, as the solicitor only did recollect the circumstance on mention of the gold coin. He was then able to produce the missing papers, and the son gained the suit after all.

Now, a dream of this kind is only explainable in one way. The son had either been present at the interview, or had been made acquainted with the circumstance by his father in the lifetime of the latter. Then he had forgotten all about it, until "latent memory" was awakened in this happy manner in sleep.

Both Plato and Aristotle have noted that in old age the recollections of childhood are renewed; and it is recorded of Kant, that, in his old age, when general memory was decayed and infirm, he had vivid recollections of his youth.

Du Prel tells of an old man, at Gottingen, seventy-six years of age, who only knew his wife and children for the day if they were pointed out to him in the morning; but had each day to be reminded who they were. Yet, at the same time he could sing all the songs of his childhood, and narrate the incidents of his youth, although later events were completely forgotten.

Most of us, probably, have witnessed

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some affecting instance of an aged person living in the scenes of the long-past, with a mind almost blank to the present. This is latent memory reawakened, but with powers of consciousness limited by an enfeebled brain.

Sir Astley Cooper gives an account of a remarkable instance of cerebral eccentricity. A soldier who had been wounded in the head fell into a long stupefaction, until he was restored to speech by an operation in the hospital. But when he did speak it was in an unknown tongue, which none about him could understand. By-and-by a Welshwoman was brought into the hospital, and she at once recognised the language of the sick soldier as her own tongue. He had not been in Wales for thirty years, yet he now spoke his long-forgotten language fluently, and could, in fact, not recollect any other. And, strange to say, when completely recovered, the English came back to him, and the Welsh was once more forgotten.

Dr. Carpenter tells of another case almost as remarkable. A man who had left Wales in his childhood, had so entirely forgotten his native tongue that he could not even understand his compatriots when they visited him. But during an attack of fever, this same man, after sixty years forgetting, spoke in delirium continuously in Welsh. On recovering health he again lost the language.

Even at the very entrance of the "Valley of the Shadow," the memory plays strange tricks. Goethe told Eckermann that he once knew an old man who in his very last moments began to recite beautiful Greek sentences. These he had been made, as a boy, to learn by heart for a special purpose; but for fifty years had not uttered them. They were there in his memory, though, all the same, and some unexplainable cerebral action suddenly gave them form and expression.

A dying peasant was heard by Doctor Steinbeck to pray in Greek and Hebrew. Questioned about it when conscious, he said that as a boy he had often heard the parish priest use the same words, without knowing what they meant.

As illustrating phenomena of memory of another sort, we may recall the case of Linnæus, who, in the decay of his memory in old age, was delighted by the reading of his own works without recognising them. Not to go so far away, there is the experience of Sir Walter Scott as related by Lockhart. "The Bride of Lammermoor" was composed and published while Scott was confined to a sick bed; and he assured Ballantyne that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained. He recollected all the incidents of the story upon which the romance was founded, but "he literally recollected nothing else; not a single character woven by the romancer; not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work."

A still more remarkable case of lapse of memory in another way is related by Doctor Pritchard. A man was engaged in splitting wood with a mallet and wedge. Previous to going home in the evening he hid his tools in a hollow tree, and told his sons at night to go for them in the morning. But the same night he became insane. Several years afterwards his reason returned as suddenly; and his first question was whether his sons had brought home the tools. They told him they had not been able to find them, whereupon he rose, went to the field where he had been working years before, and took out of their hiding-place all that was left of the tools—the iron parts, for the wood had mouldered away.

Other phenomena of memory are illustrated in the two following cases.

A soldier, during a drinking bout, lost an article belonging to an officer, with which he was entrusted. He did not even know where to look for it; but, during his next drinking bout, recollection returned, and he found the missing object. A porter, once, when drunk, delivered a parcel at the wrong house, and, when sober, forgot where he had left it. But getting drunk again, he remembered the circumstances and recovered the parcel.

It is worth noting, too, that De Quincey in his "Confessions" says, that when under the influence of opium, scenes of his childhood appeared which he had so completely forgotten that, when sober, he would not have recognised them as belonging to his own past at all. Yet they were actual recollections and reproductions.

It is computed, by scientists, that, since one-third of a second suffices to produce an "impression," in one hundred years a man must have collected, in his brain, nine thousand four hundred and sixty-seven millions two hundred

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and eighty thousand copies of impressions; or, if we take off one-third of the time for sleep, six thousand three hundred and eleven millions five hundred and twenty thousand. This would give three thousand one hundred and fifty-five millions seven hundred and sixty thousand separate waking impressions to the man who lives to the age of fifty. Allowing a weight of four pounds to the brain, and deducting one-fourth for blood and vessels and another fourth for external integument, it is further computed that each grain of brain-substance must contain two hundred and five thousand five hundred and forty-two traces or impressions.

Whatever impression the reader may derive from these figures, he must at least feel that there is a great deal yet to be learned about the faculty of memory.

Let us conclude with a brief quotation from that eminent physiologist, Doctor Maudsley:

"The remarkable memories of certain idiots, who, utterly destitute of intelligence, will repeat the longest stories with the greatest accuracy, testify to unconscious cerebral action; and the way in which the excitement of a great sorrow, or some other cause, as the last flicker of departing life, will sometimes call forth in idiots manifestations of mind of which they always seemed incapable, renders it certain that much is unconsciously taken up by them, which cannot be uttered, but which leaves its relics in the mind . . . The lunatic sometimes reverts, in his ravings, to scenes and events of which, in his sound senses, he has no memory; the fever-stricken patient may give out passages in a language which he understands not, but which he has accidentally heard; a dream of being at school again brings back with painful vividness the school feelings; and before him who is drowning, every event of his life seems to flash in one moment of strange and vivid consciousness."

PIGMIES.

THE ancient belief in the existence of a nation of Pigmies has been partly verified in modern times, for we may certainly class the Laps and the Esquimaux as belonging to a dwarfish race.

The stunted Bushmen of Southern Africa are now rivalled by the waspish imps discovered, to his cost, by the intrepid Stanley in the dismal forests through which he struggled to join Emin Pasha. A "venomous, cowardly, and thievish race, very expert with the arrow," adepts also at poisoning their weapons, and more than suspected of cannibalism; such an unattractive description will be likely to cause future travellers to give them a wide berth.

But these tribal homunculi are not so interesting a subject for consideration as the various dwarfs who have been noted in the world's history as being far below the ordinary stature of their fellow-men. These diminutive freaks of Nature have been generally stigmatised as malicious, mischievous, and untrustworthy, though capable of deep affection, as instanced in literature by the Black Dwarf of Sir Walter Scott, and Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame. But these are rather examples of deformity combined with great bodily strength. The true human dwarf is proportionate throughout, though, perhaps, attaining only half the average height.

Although giants are frequently mentioned in the Bible, there is only one reference to "a dwarf," occurring in Leviticus, twenty-first chapter, verse twenty. In the New Testament it is told of Zaccheus, the rich publican, that "he was little of stature," and we also find that, like many other little men, he worked his way to the front.

In Wierix's Bible of 1594, there is an engraving representing the feast of Dives, with Lazarus at the gate. In the banqueting room is depicted a dwarf, evidently contributing to the merriment of the company. This was probably due to a custom among persons of rank in the sixteenth century, rather than to the artist's conception of the surroundings of Dives, for the pictures and engravings of that period abound in anachronisms. It is quite possible, however, that the rich man could number a dwarf among his train, for it was a practice in the East, from the earliest times, for great personages to possess one of these little men as jester or as a curiosity.

The Egyptians had the same caprice, three thousand five hundred years ago, as is shown by the imperishable pictures they have left.

The Romans were passionately fond of dwarfs; so much so that they made them an object of commerce, and, as a consequence, in order to supply an ever ready market, the dealers invented cruel and

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artificial methods of checking the growth of infants by squeezing them in boxes, or by using tight bandages.

Julia, the niece of Augustus, had a little attendant named Sonopas, or Coropas, to whom she was much attached. He was a little over two feet in height; Andromeda, a freed maid of Julia, was little more. Even less than these was Lucius, whom Augustus exhibited in one of his plays. It is stated that he weighed only seventeen pounds, although he had a strong voice.

Pliny mentions two knights of Rome—Marius Maximus and Marcus Tullius—who were barely three feet high.

Dolabella, one of Julius Cæsar's lieutenants, though not exactly a dwarf, was so diminutive that, on one occasion at least, the jocular enquiry was made as to who had tied him so cleverly to his sword.

Pepin, the first of the French Carlovingian kings, has been described as "one of the greatest and most prudent monarchs that ever sat on the throne of France." He was, physically, most diminutive, but, at the same time, stronger than most men. A story is told of his leaping into the arena to separate a lion and a bull, and slaying them both, a feat which none of his nobles dared attempt. His small stature earned for him the surname of "le Bref." He died in the year 768, the reins of government passing into the equally able hands of his son, Charlemagne.

Another dwarfish monarch was Uladislaus Cubitalis, a King of Poland in the fourteenth century, of whom history relates that he fought more battles and obtained greater victories than any of his full-sized predecessors.

Most people have read of the famous dwarf of Charles the First's time, Jeffery Hudson, who was reputed to be the smallest man ever known, and who was, curiously enough, born in England's smallest county, Rutlandshire; on whom Sir William Davenant wrote a satirical poem entitled "Jeffreidos," celebrating Jeffery's encounter with a turkey-cock. The story of his life tells how he was twice taken by pirates; and how he was terribly affronted by one Crofts, his antagonist in a duel, coming on the field armed with a squirt, at which

> A larger portion of heroic fire,
> Did his small limbs and little breast inspire;

and in a consequent duel on horseback with pistols, he slew the jocular gentleman at the first fire.

Hudson commenced life in the service of the Duke of Buckingham, who, when visited by King Charles and his Queen, caused little Jeffery to be served up at table in a cold pie which the Duchess presented to the Queen. From that time he was kept by Henrietta as her own dwarf, and in that capacity afforded much entertainment at Court. One of the chief tormentors of his early days was the King's porter, a man of gigantic proportions. At one of the Court masques the latter drew from one pocket a loaf of bread, and from the other pulled Jeffery, to the surprise and merriment of the gay company. This ill-assorted pair were long remembered by a stone bas-relief in the wall of a house on the north side of Newgate Street, near Bagnio Court. This notable dwarf is introduced by Sir Walter Scott in "Peveril of the Peak." In after life he attained the distinction, somewhat liberally conferred in those days, of political imprisonment, ending his days in confinement at the Gate House, Westminster, in 1682, aged sixty-three years. There was a curious feature in connection with the growth of Hudson. At the age of eight he had attained a height of only eighteen inches, at which he kept until he reached thirty years of age, after which he quickly grew to more than double that height, eventually stopping at three feet nine inches.

Also attached to the Court of Charles the First was another dwarf named Richard Gibson, originally page to a lady of Mortlake, who, discovering his bent for painting, had him carefully instructed. He followed Sir Peter Lely's style, and made excellent copies of his portraits. Charles the First made him a page of the back-stairs; and when Gibson married Anne Shepherd, another dwarf, the kingly presence graced the occasion. This event was celebrated by Waller in a poem entitled "The Marriage of the Dwarfs."

Sir Peter Lely painted the happy pair life-size; both appearing of an equal stature of about three feet ten inches. In after years Gibson was chosen to instruct the Princesses, Mary and Anne, in drawing and painting. He had nine children; five arriving at maturity. These were well-proportioned and of average height. He certainly lived a more peaceful and useful life than his contemporary Hudson, who was the go-between in many of the petty intrigues of the period.

This pigmy painter died in his seventy-fifth year; and his wife, having survived

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him nearly twenty years, died in 1709, aged eighty-nine. In this instance shortness of stature was certainly compensated by length of days.

In 1674 there was born in Germany a dwarf named Matthew Buchinger, who had neither hands, feet, nor legs. He had, however, two curious excrescences growing from the shoulder blades, which more resembled the fins of a fish than the arms of a man. Notwithstanding this, he could write well, and performed many queer and active tricks. In 1717 Buchinger was exhibited in London, being then only twenty-nine inches high. He was patronised by George the First and most of the Royal Family, before whom he played on several musical instruments, and exhibited his skill at skittles, cards, and other games. This extraordinary dwarf actually married four times, and had eleven children in all. Several specimens of Buchinger's handwriting still exist among the Harleian Manuscripts.

It is recorded that, in 1710, Peter the Great celebrated with much pomp and ceremony the marriage of two dwarfs at Saint Petersburg. He commanded all dwarfs, both male and female, residing within two hundred miles of his capital, to be present at the event; and for their convenience supplied carriages, each of which would contain a dozen or so of the diminutive guests. The whole company of dwarfs numbered seventy, besides the bride and bridegroom, who were very richly dressed. Everything provided for the miniature assemblage was suitable in size. An elaborate banquet was followed by a ball, which was opened, of course, by the newly-wedded pair with a minuet, the dancing being gaily continued for a considerable time by the Liliputian company.

Russia, it would seem, was a country happy in the possession of a goodly stock of dwarfs, for Porter, an old traveller, relates in his journeyings in Russia and Sweden, early this century, that in the former country, there was scarcely a nobleman who did not possess one or more of the native pigmies.

"Taking them as a whole," he says, "they are compact, and even pretty little beings, and no idea can be formed of them from the clumsy, deformed dwarfs which are exhibited at English fairs."

In the "Spectator" of 1712, an amusing letter is printed from a showman, referring to the exhibition, in London, of a little black man, his equally diminutive wife, and a miniature "Turkey" horse. These are described as the smallest man, woman, and horse ever seen in the world. The man, it appears, was distinguished by the title of "The Black Prince;" he was thirty-six inches in height and thirty-two years of age; while his spouse, who was of the same height and age, was popularly known as the "Fairy Queen." The horse, which was kept in a small box, was not more than twenty-four inches high, and about twelve years of age.

There is an account in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1735, of the arrival in London of a dwarf from France, measuring only twenty-one inches, who

> At Court a wonder great was shewn,
> Where he, tho' only forty-six,
> Performed twenty childish tricks.

One of the most celebrated of the dwarfs that have left a name in the history of curiosities, is, perhaps, Joseph Borowlaski, better known as "Joujou." He was born in 1739, and died at the great age of ninety-eight. In 1783 he visited England, where he created some sensation. "Joujou" possessed good capabilities, and was considered very smart at repartee. On one occasion, when questioned by a very stout and rather vulgar lady as to what religion he professed, he replied that he was a Roman Catholic. Upon which she told him there was, she feared, no hope of his going to heaven. He reminded her that the Scriptures said that the gate to heaven was narrow, and, therefore, he hoped that he had more chance than she had, glancing slyly, at the same time, at her broad and bulky proportions.

"Joujou" wrote his "Reminiscences," and gives a good illustration of the irascible nature of dwarfs in general, as exhibited in Bébé, a famous dwarf of the King of Poland. He relates that, whilst visiting the Polish Court, the King took much notice of him, which caused Bébé to show signs of the greatest jealousy and hatred, and, in the end, to attempt to push "Joujou" into the fire—an offence for which Bébé was duly punished. Bébé, unlike his contemporary, died at the early age of twenty-three, and was only thirty-three inches in height at the time of his death. At his birth he measured eight inches, and, when baptised, was so small as to be presented on a plate. Although of a very passionate nature, it is said that he was a great favourite with the King.

In 1740 there was in London a Persian dwarf forty-five years of age, and three

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feet eight inches in eight. He is stated to have delighted "the nobility and gentry of Europe" with his wonderful performance in carrying on each arm the largest men amongst the spectators.

Still another dwarf was exhibited in 1751, this time a native of Glamorganshire, who in his fifteenth year was only thirty inches high, and weighed only twelve pounds, but who is described as being "very proportionable."

Hone gives an account of a little man hailing from Norfolk, a county more famous for giants than for dwarfs, much to the credit of its dumplings. This particularly small "dumpling," John Coan, was thirty-eight inches high at twenty-three years of age, and weighed only thirty-four pounds. He is described as being perfectly straight, of good complexion, and having a sprightly temper. He could sing tolerably well, and gained great applause by his exact imitation of the crowing of a cock.

The "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1813 notifies the sudden death of a curious little man known as Crutchy Jack. Though not more than three feet in height, he was the father of eight fine, robust children. His head was of such a size as to be out of all proportion to his small body; but irregular as was his conformation, his constitution was sound; for Crutchy Jack lived beyond three-score years. His wife and four children survived him.

Many have perhaps heard or read of the remarkable Scottish dwarf, named Ritchie, upon whose character Sir Walter Scott is said to have founded his story of the "Black Dwarf." Ritchie took up his abode early in the present century in Peebleshire, where he built with his own hands a small but very strong cottage. He was possessed of enormous strength; and his skull was of such thickness that he could with ease strike it through the panel of a door without feeling any ill effect. He had a horrible laugh, which was compared to the cry of a screech-owl. He was of a most irritable temper; and, as may be imagined, his habits were most singular and eccentric.

In 1825, a female dwarf went the round of the English fairs. She was described as being thirty-one inches in height and twenty-two years of age, though the showman's title for her was "the little old woman of Bagdad."

Richebourg, a celebrated French dwarf, only twenty-three and a half inches high, died in the Rue du Four, Saint Germain, in 1858, aged ninety. When young, he was in the service of the Duchesse d'Orleans, mother of King Louis Philippe; but, though he held the title of "butler," he performed none of the duties of that office. After the Revolution broke out, his period of usefulness began. He was employed to convey despatches abroad, and, for that purpose, was dressed as a baby, the papers being concealed in his cap, and a nurse being made to carry him. During the last twenty-five years of his life he lived in the Rue du Four, and never went out. He disliked strangers, and was alarmed when he heard the voice of one; but in his own family he was very lively and cheerful, often narrating, with much glee, his adventures as the baby letter-carrier evading the jealous watchfulness of the Republican frontier-guards. For his services in this capacity the Orleans family allowed him a pension of three thousand francs.

Another representative of Liliput—little known, perhaps, to the general public, owing to his never having been publicly exhibited, but of some celebrity in official circles—was George Trout, a messenger of the House of Commons, who died about the year 1840. Trout—familiarly known as "the dwarf"—was barely a yard high, and had very short arms and legs, but an enormous head. He was a very well-known character in Westminster Hall, where he was employed by Members of the House to carry papers and messages to different parts of London.

An account of human pigmies would be incomplete without some reference to the most celebrated of all modern dwarfs, whose figure will be well remembered by many of the present day.

Charles Stratton, better known as General Tom Thumb, was born in Connecticut in 1832. He was first exhibited by Barnum, in New York, where he became, for a time, the "lion" of the city. In 1844, when his height was only twenty-five inches, and his weight fifteen pounds, he came to England, where he was exhibited and visited the Queen, besides appearing at the Princess's Theatre in the character of Napoleon, gaining some fame as an actor. In the "Illustrated London News" of that year is to be found a sketch of the carriage he had built for himself by a firm of well-known carriage builders. This was drawn by a pair of tiny Shetland ponies.

Having made a considerable fortune, he

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went back to America, and there married another dwarf, a little lady not much taller than himself. Visiting England again in 1864, with his wife and two other dwarfs, "Commodore" Nutt and Minnie Warren, he again made a large fortune, with which he again retired to his native land.

Owing to the success achieved by the little "General," exhibitions of mannikins have been rather numerous in recent years. Of these exhibits, an interesting pair, styled the "Midgets," have perhaps attracted the most attention; but, in these matter-of-fact days, nothing like the sensation of former years has been created.

It will be seen from the foregoing examples that dwarfs of all nations have been exhibited, and that generally their intellectual power is of no mean order. Moreover, we have plain evidence that dwarfish proportions by no means militate against longevity.

Little men, perhaps, because of their fussy self-importance, have been satirised in Young's line:

Pigmies are pigmies still, though perched on Alps.

Yet it is not too much to say, that in courage, wit, and influence on passing events, the dwarfs of history have shown themselves superior to the giants, who, to tell the truth, have rather acquired the character of being soft-hearted but thick-headed. Sportsmen, speaking of horses, sagely remark that "a good big 'un will beat a good little 'un;" but our diminutive brethren may justly claim that, among men, the little ones are more often to the front than the sons of Anak.

PORTSMOUTH AND ITS DOCKYARD.

NOTHING in the way of names of places seems more simple and descriptive than Portsmouth. There is the port, and the town at its mouth—and what more is wanted? Yet is the matter not altogether so straightforward as it appears. For, as a haven, the history of the place can be carried back to a period long before the Saxon tongue was spoken in the land. There is reason to identify the place with Llongborth, where King Arthur fought one of his victorious battles against the invader, and the descriptive Celtic name of Porthmaur, or the big haven, might have easily been corrupted into the present designation of the town. But the matter is rendered still more doubtful from the fact, as recorded in the Saxon chronicle, that one Port, a Saxon chief, landed here, "and slew a very noble young British man," and, apparently, so far made himself master of the shore as to occupy the old Roman fortress on the spit of land at the head of the harbour; which henceforth bore his name, as Portchester, a name which is still retained by the ruins of the old castle. There the matter must be left; but enough has been written to show that Portsmouth is no mere creation of modern times, but can boast of as high antiquity as any town of them all.

No seafaring people could overlook the advantages of Portsmouth Haven, for which nature has done so much. With the Isle of Wight as a permanent natural breakwater and a splendid anchorage at Spithead, we have a noble, landlocked basin, so favourably situated as to conflicting tidal currents, that the scour of the ebb is sufficient to keep the channel clear. And, while one after another of the harbours of our south coast has been silted up by sand and beach, and flourishing mediæval ports have become so many deserted villages, Portsmouth has remained from age to age an excellent maritime station—whether for the light galleys of earlier times, or the ponderous ironclads of the present day.

Danish sea-kings made a rendezvous of the haven, and drew up their war ships on the beach—which is now the Portsmouth Hard—the resort of seamen, crimps, and all manner of seafaring folk in later days. The Norman Kings were constantly landing and embarking from Portsmouth shore. And as for naval reviews, there has been a constant succession of these from the time when King Henry the First mustered his ships there, and appeared among them in Royal state.

Such a muster there was under Edward the Third, when he sailed for the coast of Normandy, in 1346, an expedition which resulted in the great victory of Crécy, where the Black Prince won the achievement and motto which ever since have belonged to the Princes of Wales. Here Henry the Fifth assembled a fleet which was destined for the relief of Harfleur—then besieged by the Constable of France. The fleet put to sea under the valiant Duke of Bedford, and, defeating the blockading French squadron, compelled the Constable to raise the siege.

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Hitherto, the strength of Portsmouth had rested chiefly on its natural advantages. Temporary sheds and buildings were raised along the shore, when a fleet was fitted out or an army embarked. The French had landed and burnt the place more than once, destroying timber and shipping, and sending the unhappy burgesses of the little town flying to the woods and marshes, with their wives, and children, and belongings. But Edward the Fourth mustered there an army and fleet, in 1475, when he was engaged in a brief war with Louis the Eleventh of France, and is said to have reviewed an army of thirty thousand men on Southsea Common, and at the same time ordered the construction of forts and blockhouses to defend the harbour. When Leland visited the place, in 1540, he found existing the forts which Edward had built, and which Richard the Third and Henry the Seventh had strengthened; with a great dock for ships, and "a mighty chain of yron," that could be drawn across the entrance to the harbour. The town, such as it was, was protected by a mud wall.

But, if the town had no great pretensions in the way of churches and public buildings, and was only indifferently fortified, it was the home of hardy seamen and adventurous traders, who turned their hands indifferently to fighting. In recompense for aid in men and ships, Richard the lion-hearted had granted a charter of incorporation to the little town; and the flag of Portsmouth was borne among broils and fights with Easterlings and Cinque Ports men, as well as upon the coasts and rivers of France. Thus, when the French, in the reign of Richard the Second, landed at Portsmouth and burnt it, the town presently fitted out a fleet for reprisals, which, putting the French ships to rout and capturing many of them, sailed up the Seine, plundering and burning on its way, and so returned in safety, with much profit and glory.

These irregular expeditions, however, came to an end, as regular navies came into existence, composed of ships expressly built for war, and chiefly manned by a general levy of all the seafaring men along the coast. There was no need of pressgangs then, the animosity against foreigners in general, and the love of fighting, which actuated the sea dogs of Old England, were sufficient inducement to rally all the able men of the coast to the King's flag. Thus, when there was an alarm of invasion from France—in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and A.D. 1545—all the seamen from the west-country ports assembled at Portsmouth to man the King's fleet.

Portsmouth had been considerably strengthened by Henry the Eighth, who had enlarged or rebuilt the tower of King Edward the Fourth, as well as the blockhouses on the other side of the harbour. In the Privy Council records of 1536, appears the appointment of one John Ridley, page of the King's long-bows, to be keeper of the tower and houses called le Bloke house and Bere house at Portsmouth, vice Richard Palshid, deceased, with fees of twelvepence a day; and about the same date we have an inventory of ordnance stores which shows the curiously mixed description of arms then in use. Thus we have "In Portsmouth, 14 cannons, demi-cannons, port-pieces, slings, and fowlers. In the tower at Portsmouth a brass piece of Venice making, 2 falcons, 2 port-pieces, bows, strings, and arrows, bills, morris pikes, and archer stakes." And as to the state of the navy at that date, we have a memorandum in the handwriting of Cromwell—Wolsey's late secretary and his successor in the King's favour—recounting "the great things done by the King's highness sythyn I came to his service," and how he "new made the Mary Rosse, the Peter Powngarnerd, the Lion, the Katheryn Gulye, the Barke, the Mynyon, the Sweepstake. Woods beside Portsmouth"—that is, a store of timber there—"sufficient for the new making of the Harry Grace a Dew, and the gret Galye."

In the same year, 1536, there is a payment for slates for the King's storehouse at Portsmouth; these are from Purbeck quarries, and slabs of stone are evidently meant, such as were then often used for roofing. There is a charge, too, of four hundred pounds for Apparailing the King's ships at Portsmouth, an item suggestive of the poet's line—

Her tackling rich and of apparel high.

At this same time the Great Harry was in course of being newly made at Portsmouth, and one of Cromwell's agents writes that there is great need of money at Portsmouth, and that "before the Harry be hanged upon her shores she will cost £500."

It was then that Portsmouth began to be known as the key of England. And

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there was sufficient necessity for all the activity that was displayed there, for the French fleet at that time had a decided preponderance in the Channel. In 1545 matters came to a crisis; there was open war between the two countries; and all along the Norman and Breton seaboard a strong fleet was being prepared for a decisive attack on England. Portsmouth was to be the point attacked; the King of England's ships and all his naval stores were to be burned; after which the conquest of England, and the enrichment with her spoils of all who took part in the expedition, would follow in due course.

The country was alive to the peril. The King in person came to Portsmouth to review the preparations for the naval battle impending. A strong camp was formed on Portsea Island and all available land forces mustered there. By the end of June over a hundred sail were collected at Portsmouth with sixteen thousand seamen, nearly all from the western ports. Only a few old men and boys were left in the various fishing towns; but the women proved themselves men on this and on sundry other occasions. The women manned the fishing-boats, eight or nine of them in one boat, with only a boy or perhaps an old greybeard to handle the tiller. Sometimes the women would venture twenty miles or more to sea, and would be chased home by French privateers. And thus they gathered the harvest of the deep, and earned the daily bread of the community, while the men were standing to their guns on board the big ships.

It was a stirring pageant when the King reviewed the whole gallant fleet. All the gentry of the West had come to join the fray. There were Berkeleys, Careys, Courtenays, Clintons, Seymours, vying with each other in the gallant equipment of their ships, and in the brilliance of their array. The King, passing along the line of ships, was received with general enthusiasm. At night the watchword given went round from ship to ship; it was "God save the King," and the reply was "Long to reign over us!"

Westerly gales kept the French ships in port; but in July the fleet mustered at the mouth of the Seine and sailed with a favouring breeze for the English coast. After plundering and burning a little on the coast from Brighton westwards, the formidable Armada swept down upon the Solent with the object of destroying Portsmouth, and with it the naval power of England.

King Henry had just reviewed his fleet, when news was brought from the Isle of Wight that the French were in full sight from the back of the island. At once the Royal camp was in commotion; the batteries along the shore were manned; captains and fighting men hastily embarked. It was evening before the enemy appeared in sight—a cloud of white sails, with a swarm of boats in advance taking soundings as they went, and directing the course of the flotilla. Rounding Saint Helen's Point, on the other side of the strait, and coming slowly into position, the enemy anchored in a long line that stretched from Brading Haven to Ryde. It was a lovely, calm night, with faint, variable airs, and anything like a general engagement was impracticable; but fourteen of the lighter English ships worked their way out of the harbour, and engaged at long bowls with the enemy. And so night closed in, lit up by the flashes of distant and random guns.

Day broke in perfect calm and tranquillity, with hardly a ripple on the water. Sails hung drooping on the yards; flags and pennants were not stirred by the faintest breeze. The ships in harbour were cleared for action; the crews were ready and eager for the fray; but there lay the English ships immovable. The French were not so much at a loss. Attached to their fleet were a number of swift galleys, with long sweeps, manned by convicts and desperadoes, and armed with guns of considerable power. These dashed forward, and running close to the harbour's mouth, where the great English ships hung helplessly at their anchors, poured a destructive fire into the thick of them. The "Great Harry," the pride of the English navy, hulled by several shots, was almost at the point of sinking; the whole fleet seemed at the mercy of the enemy, to be pounded and sunk at their pleasure.

But just in time a breeze sprang up—a breeze from off the land. The light, quick-sailing English frigates were soon in motion, and dashing out in pursuit of the galleys, soon drove them to take shelter under the guns of their fleet. Then the big battleships got under weigh, and the action became general. One of the finest of the English ships was the "Mary Rose," with Sir George Carew for her Captain. She had cleared the harbour, and was

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bearing down to share in the fight. Her ports were open, her guns run out, ready to open fire, when a sudden catspaw of wind caught the sails. The great wall-sided ship heeled over, her guns, which had not been properly secured, rolled over from one side to the other; she turned over and down she went with all her crew. The catastrophe, witnessed by the whole fleet, damped the spirits of the English. They hesitated to close with the overpowering force of the enemy. But the French, on their side, experienced a similar misfortune: their treasure ship, "La Maitresse," containing the naval money chest, went down in deep water. A desultory kind of battle lasted all day long. At night, the French drew off. They had not suffered greater loss than the English, but they had failed in their purpose. They found Portsmouth too hard a nut to crack. And when they landed on the Isle of Wight they did not fare much better, for the country people were all under arms, and resolute to defend their homesteads and villages. There was no glory to be obtained in such combats, and the French put to sea again, but soon anchored off the coast, the line of ships extending from Chichester Harbour mouth to Selsea Bill.

Then the gallant captains of the English fleet took council of the old western sea-dogs, and it was determined to make an attempt to capture the enemy's fleet or drive their ships ashore. The wind was favourable; described as "a little gale of wind at plank west blown to a course and a bonnet off." But when all was ready for a night attack, news came that the French had sheered off and gone home to refit. They came back before long and attacked Seaford, which was one of the Cinque Ports, but somewhat decayed even at that time. And then, what with bad weather, and shortness of provisions, and the crowded state of the ships, a pestilence broke out in the fleet, which caused the ships to disperse; and thus the most formidable armament which had yet been seen on the narrow seas came to an end.

After this, we hear of no more foreign attempts on Portsmouth. The Spanish Armada sailed by, but far out at sea, and though Elizabeth strengthened the forts and repaired the town walls, yet the Royal favour was chiefly bestowed on the new establishment at Chatham, where the main strength of the Navy was now bestowed; and during the two succeeding reigns Portsmouth was somewhat neglected for the rival establishments on the Thames and Medway.

The Duke of Buckingham, indeed, was superintending the fitting out of an expedition to sail for La Rochelle, when he was stabbed by Felton, in a mean little inn, the site of which is still to be found in Portsmouth High Street. The gibbet upon which Felton's body was hung in chains, just above high-water mark, stood as a sea-mark for many years, and a blackened stump of it long remained in existence, and appears in a view of Portsmouth published with the "Portsmouth Guide" of 1775. Whether the relic was regarded with veneration, or otherwise, by the people of Portsmouth, there is no evidence to show.

In the Civil War Portsmouth cast in its lot on the side of the Parliament. The garrison, however, or sundry of its officers, were well affected to the King; and we hear of one Captain Wiles, who, sent forth for the defence of the King's dominions, "did revolt to His Majestie;" and how "his souldiers did give him his due reward in slaying him." And another pamphlet dilates on the same affair under the title of "An uprore at Portsmouth: an advertisement to halting Captains."

If the importance of Portsmouth declined during the Civil War and the Restoration, it increased mightily on the accession of William of Orange, and the commencement of vigorous hostilities against the French. From Portsmouth sailed Admiral Russel, in 1692, to join in the famous battle of La Hogue, which was fought under the eyes of King James, and in which he could not help admiring the prowess of his countrymen, fatal though it was to his own prospects. In the following year, William, in person, reviewed at Portsmouth the fleet of Admiral Rooke, which did not, however, do any great things thereafter, except to lose the Smyrna merchant-fleet, which it had under convoy. A few years later, however, the Admiral atoned for his maladroitness by laying hands on Gibraltar, which has ever since remained an English possession. At Portsmouth, too, mustered the fleet that, under Sir George Byng, was to guard the Channel against an expected attempt of the old Pretender to land in England, an attempt defeated by an attack of measles which the unlucky Stuart contracted at the wrong moment.

Then we have plenty of work for Portsmouth; fleets sailing and coming in, cruisers

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fitted out and sent out to sea, and a fair number of privateers of all kinds. Anson sails for his voyage round the world. Admiral Hawke comes in with a long train of French prizes. Admiral Byng, the son of Sir George, comes in to be tried by a court-martial of all the captains of the fleet. He is condemned and shot, "pour encourager les autres," on board the "Monarque," which is presently wrecked on a Devonshire headland, and lost, with all hands. After this, Wolfe's body, glorious from the Heights of Abraham, is brought in with solemn reverence. And, after that, we have more Royal reviews.

It is King George the Third who is now concerned. He sets out from Kew at an early hour in the morning, posting in his fine chariot with the six prancing horses. By noon the King is at Portsbridge, and welcomed with a salute of twenty-one guns. At Landport Gate there is a Royal salvo of two hundred and thirty-two guns, beyond which it would be hardly possible to go in the way of deafening powder-burning. Then the King sets forth in his Royal barge from the Dockyard, followed by a stately procession of barges and launches; the Admiralty Lords in Court uniform, the Admirals of the Fleet and the Captains thereof being all in attendance. The Fleet consisted of twenty ships of the line, two frigates, and three sloops. His Majesty sat down to an early dinner, for which his long drive had well prepared him, on board the "Barfleur."

Next morning the King went back to Kew full of the "highest approbation and utmost satisfaction" at all he had seen and done.

By this time Portsmouth had assumed much of the appearance and character still familiar to us in Captain Marryat's stories: a rather dirty town, with narrow streets swarming with sailors and their girls, Jews, crimps, clothes-dealers and out-fitters; with middies galore, and stout and rosy post-captains constantly arriving and departing in stage-coach or post-chaise.

There were three "elegant inns" resorted to by the naval officers: "The George," "The Fountain," and "The King's Arms," and a very good coffee-house on the grand parade called "The Crown." Regular, and, for the period, rapid communication with London existed in 1775 by the "Flying Machine," which left Portsmouth on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights for "The Spread Eagle and Cross Keys," Gracechurch Street. On the alternate days there there was another machine from "The Blue Posts"—afterwards the great resort of Marryat's middies—which stopped at "The Golding Cross." Then there was the Portsmouth Waggon also from "The Blue Posts," for "The White Hart" and "King's Head" in the Borough; and with that the Gosport Waggon to "Bell Savage."

In a view of Portsmouth of the same date, 1775, the general aspect of the place is not widely different from the present. There we have the Haslar Hospital, the Blockhouse Fort of King Harry's days, the channel to Gosport, the Platform Battery, and the Magazine within the walls; then the Spur Battery and the King's Bastion, the Governor's house conspicuous among more lowly roofs; the Church and the Marine Barracks, with ravelins and bastions, land gates and water gates; and, beyond the masts and rigging, the frame-work of unfinished ships, the floating castles and stranded hulks scattered about the harbour and dockyard.

At a closer view you may see the King's Mill, worked by the tide, which flows into a huge basin, and is let out again by sluices, which drive the King's water-wheel merrily enough, and so grind the corn which makes the biscuit for Jack to eat at sea. The gun wharf is there much as it is now, and the ramparts, a beautiful elevated terrace walk, where cocked hats and tie-wigs are in loving converse with furbelows and feathers.

With these we have "a neat and regular theatre at the upper end of the High Street," where the regular drama is played by their Majesties' servants. A glance over the play-bills of the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, for the year 1781, shows a varied and attractive bill of fare. One evening we may have the tragedy of "Venice Preserved," with Mr. Barrymore as Jaffier; the next, perhaps, it is "The Beggars' Opera," with Staunton as Macheath. To follow, there will be some farce to please the nautical element in the gallery — "Thomas and Sally; or, the Sailor's Return;" or, perhaps, a hornpipe, by Mr. Everhard. Shakespeare takes a turn with Sheridan or Goldsmith; "The Merry Wives," "Richard the Third," or "Romeo and Juliet," alternates with "She Stoops to Conquer," and "The School for Scandal." Then we have "George Barnwell," and "Douglas, a Tragedy," and an "Historical Play: Edward the Black

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Prince," no doubt with plenty of topical allusions to "frog-eating Frenchmen," and victories by land or sea. And we may fancy what thunders of execration or applause, from Jack ashore, would greet "Fungus, a Commissary," or the stirring cry of "Rodney for ever."

About this time—in 1782, to be precise—occurred one of those catastrophes which make a strong impression on the popular imagination by reason of their unexpectedness and completeness. Other accidents to Royal ships have occurred from time to time. There was the "Mary Rose," it will be remembered, sunk in 1545, whose bones still lie fathoms deep in the sand, and from which relics in the shape of guns or munitions of war are still occasionally dredged up. Other disasters may have escaped notice in centuries not blessed with ubiquitous newspaper correspondents.

But in 1703—not long after Benbow had died fighting "on his stumps"—the "Newcastle" line-of-battle ship foundered at her anchors at Spithead. Again, in 1711, the "Edgar," seventy-four guns, just home from Canada, blew up in harbour, with eight hundred men on board, nearly all of whom perished. But the loss of the "Royal George" came upon people in an impressionable mood, and, finding a poet to record it, his homely lines were soon in everybody's mouth, and children without end have learnt them by heart.

The "Royal George" was lying quietly at anchor off Spithead, after a spell of foreign service; there were fiddles going between decks, and Moll and Sue were there, with bumboat-women, and all kinds of visitors from the shore. The Admiral was in the cabin writing, and the officers were calmly watching the operations of the workmen from the Dockyard, who, to clean the ship's copper sheathing,

> Had made the vessel heel
> And laid her on her side.

Just then a puff of wind came from off shore; the ports were open, the guns not properly secured,

> Down went the "Royal George,"
> With all her crew complete.

Not every soul perished, however. A captain and a lieutenant swam ashore, and a midshipman was also saved, with one or two seamen. The captain, seeing the ship going down with a swirl, seized young Pierce, the middy, by the waistband and flung him into the sea, free of the vortex of the sinking ship. The boy could not swim a stroke, but a sailor helped him to keep afloat, and then to the main shrouds; for when the ship settled, her top-masts were still above water. A sheep, too, swam ashore, with an infant holding on to the fleece. But all the rest perished—the eight hundred of crew and officers, and many who were not rated on the ship's books.

The line-of-battle ship "Boyne" took fire, in 1795, at her moorings at Spithead. Officers and crew escaped by the boats sent to their assistance, but the ship, drifting away, made for the harbour with the flood tide, and threatened destruction to all the shipping. Fortunately she took the ground near the Castle, and her magazines blew up with a tremendous report that shook the town to its foundations.

As a set-off to these disasters, we have the triumphant home-coming of Lord Howe, in 1794, after his victory of the first of June, with a string of six line-of-battle ships as prizes. Again, we have Jervis landing after the victory of Saint Vincent, in 1797; and from that time a whole crop of victories and naval triumphs—the great Nelson being now upon the scene. Then, in 1803, Lord Nelson hoists his flag at Portsmouth and is busy about the preparations there; and in 1805 he embarks on board the "Victory" from Southsea beach, amid a crowd of enthusiastic spectators. And then, a little while, and the "Victory" came home again, with the body of the hero on board. And the good ship has lain at anchor in the harbour there ever since, as a kind of floating memorial of the greatest sailor of our fathers', or any other days; and people who visit Portsmouth make a point of going to see the old "Victory," to tread the quarter-deck where Nelson fell, and to visit the dungeon-like hole among the great ship's timbers, which was the "cockpit"—once devoted to the middies—where great Nelson died.

Portsmouth, too, has seen camps and reviews on Southsea Common without number; the Allied Sovereigns, in 1814; George the Fourth embarking for Ireland, in 1821. Then, as pioneer of the great changes that are to transform the fleet and the system of naval warfare, comes the opening of the steam basin by Queen Victoria, in 1848. A few years later Napier sails for the Baltic, with the first steam war-vessels, and Victoria visits the fleet and wishes the seamen Godspeed.

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Then we have a season of hard transitional work in the Dockyard, while the whole plant and appliances of a steam navy are being created.

We were proud of our fine steam navy in 1867, when the Queen reviewed the fleet at Spithead, with the Sultan and Khedive as her guests. But everything has changed since then, and we are already wondering whether our huge ironclads are about to be superseded by some new type of fighting-machine.

THE MEMOIR MANIA.

It is a well-established fact that since the earliest dawn of what we may call the "reading era," when books first came to be looked upon as necessities rather than luxuries, the reading public has been subject to manias, under the influence of which it has devoured one class of literature almost to the exclusion of any other. At one time, for example, it read nothing but plays; later on, essays were the chief of its mental diet; while, during the first quarter of this century, incredible as it may now appear, it actually read poetry with apparent enjoyment. This was followed by the great novel-reading era which has lasted ever since.

During the last few years, however, fiction—although its popularity is by no means on the wane—has had a new and unexpected rival in the shape of the Memoir; under which heading may be classed Biographies, Autobiographies, and Reminiscences. Now, we believe that in the case of each mania we have mentioned, contrary to the usual rules, the demand has been created by the supply. Shakespeare and Massinger, as afterwards Dryden and Congreve, brought and kept the drama in fashion. Swift, Addison, and Steele caused the popularity of the essay; Scott and the Lake Poets, that of poetry. Under the fostering care of Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot, fiction, which hitherto had been but a stunted plant, suddenly shot up like a kind of literary beanstalk, and, to follow out the simile, became the ladder by which many Jacks have climbed to fame and fortune.

Now, until within the last ten or fifteen years, really popular Memoirs, those, that is, which were read and talked about by the general public, might almost have been counted on the fingers of one hand. With some few exceptions, the life of a great man was looked upon as a tough, unattractive morsel, which, if bought, found a place among the histories and sermons in the most prominent, and least used, shelves of the library.

"We are inclined to think that the "boom" in Memoirs was started by Charles Greville. He was spiteful, personal, a clever portrayer of character—from his own point of view—and spoke ill of persons in high places. The success of his first volume was instant and complete, as was that of its successors, although the third was scarcely spicy enough to suit the popular taste.

Then appeared Carlyle's Reminiscences, which were received with rapture by the public. People were delighted at discovering that the sage was a man of like passions with themselves, and certainly was afflicted with most of the ills that human nature is heir to. He, too, wrote with a sharp-pointed pen, dipped in gall; and, best of all, he not only washed his dirty linen in public, but, so to speak, wrung it out and ironed it.

Anthony Trollope's "Reminiscences," as we all know, made another big success. True, he was not ill-natured; but he made up for this want by taking his readers into his confidence, and telling them, almost to a penny, how much he earned and how he earned it, besides keeping them in a good humour with numerous anecdotes.

Since his time, the fun has been growing fast and furious. Statesmen, Bishops, Judges, Generals, Actors, Artists, all have taken to pen and ink as naturally as ducks to water, and, for the most part, have met with a very flattering reception. The British public has swallowed them all—tough morsels as some of them were—and being blessed with an apparently ostrich-like digestion, asks for more.

At the present time there seems to be no reason why any man over fifty, whose name has been before the public in any capacity whatever, should not publish his memoirs; and should not, if he proceed upon the principles laid down by those who have already obtained popularity in the same path, find a ready sale for them, during one season at least.

It is, by this time, a sufficient well-established fact that a biography, however well written it may be, is generally heavier reading than an autobiography. As has been truly remarked, an author seldom fails to be readable when he is interested

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in his subject, and in what subject is a man ever so deeply interested as in himself? The art of editing a Life, on the other hand, is still in its infancy, and, consequently, we may perhaps be allowed to make a few suggestions for the benefit of the literary undertaker who nails together the shell which is to contain the (often wholly unrecognisable) remains of the dead man's individuality. Too often, this task devolves upon some blindly admiring friend or relation, who crams three thick volumes with a hotch-potch consisting of long letters which could scarcely have been interesting even to the recipients; extracts from journals kept during Continental tours, and plainly copied from the "Guide Books;" minute accounts of stale political events—and what begins to stink, metaphorically speaking, sooner than politics? —small-beer chronicles of house-keeping troubles, bilious attacks, and infantine bons mots.

In spite of all this very minute information, we seldom get a true picture of the subject of a biography. This arises from the fact that the unfortunate biographer has to wade through such an enormous mass of material relating to his hero, that his mind is apt to get warped, and he becomes for the time being a harmless monomaniac; consequently he makes but a feeble attempt to edit the papers committed to him, but publishes, wholesale, letters and journals which should have been privately disposed of to the family grocer, and which would have been correctly valued by that gentleman at one penny per pound. In these days when, thanks to the penny-post, the art of letter-writing, like the Tyrian dye and the Cremona varnish, has become one of the lost secrets of the world, the fewer specimens we are given of the epistolary craft the better we are pleased.

The most fatal mistake made by the biographer, however, is that of clothing his hero with a garment of impossible perfection. Not only is he ever kind to his virtues, but he is also stone-blind to his faults. Consequently we get the portrait of a creature, who, like the lover in an old-fashioned novel, loses all hold on our sympathies from the mere fact of his being "so uninterestingly good." Of course, it is obvious enough that, in the matter of character-drawing, the biographer has a very difficult and delicate task, for he feels bound to attempt not only to satisfy the general public with a tolerably-recognisable portrait of his subject, but also to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the dead man's friends and relations. The usual result is a kind of Whistlerian study in rose-colour.

In conclusion, we would draw attention to the excellent new departure made by the late Dean Burgon in his "Lives of Twelve Good Men." Here, in the space usually occupied by one biography, we have a dozen, and yet each is a life-like and highly-finished portrait. It seems to us that this idea might be further developed with advantage. Why should we not have the lives of "Twelve Bad Men"—which would make the fortune of both author and publisher—"Twelve Clever Men," "Twelve Dull, Unknown, and Utterly Uninteresting Men"—which would be no novelty—and so on, ad infinitum? We commend this suggestion to the favourable consideration of the biographer of the future.

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER II. WATCHING AND WAITING.

MR CANDYTUFT was a man of a very sympathetic nature; but his sympathy somehow always made you feel like a cat whose fur is being rubbed up the wrong way. Instead of purring and feeling soothed and comforted, you wanted to spit and scratch.

When he heard that Louis was lying dangerously ill in his rooms at the prison, Mr. Candytuft rushed to see us and tell us how deeply he felt for our anxiety.

When he learned that Mazie and myself were spending half our time at the said prison, helping to watch over the sick bed, he patted my hand that he had just taken in adieu, shook his head, and said that, under the painful circumstances of the case, he was afraid people might think this proceeding on our part "rather odd."

I said people were quite welcome to think what they pleased. I rather fancy I tossed my head; but of this I am not sure. At all events, I felt like tossing my head, and Mr. Candytuft certainly looked frightened.

"If one is to be the slave of the opinions of others like that, Mr. Candytuft," I added, severely, "one might as well be a Zulu at once — an ignorant, benighted Zulu."

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This I put in with a glance at a couple of assegais that hung cross-wise over the piano—souvenirs of the war, sent home by our precious Glennie.

Mr. Candytuft looked calmly disapproving.

"Strong language, Miss Dacie; strong language," he said, "from one whom I have looked upon as the gentlest of my flock."

"Still, you know, one old sheep will butt at another in defence of her lamb," I replied—with a distinct toss this time—and, looking somewhat beaten, Mr. Candytuft took his departure.

After the Vicar had gone, I set off to the prison.

I was not surprised at Louis having broken down. Women can always bear more mental strain than men and for a longer time, because they do not repress all evidence of suffering so sternly. I was, indeed, in a manner, prepared for this breakdown, and not astonished that the last touch, added to the trials and troubles that surrounded Louis Draycott, had brought it about. For a man to find his life hampered and crippled by a woman who disgraced the name he gave her; to know that the life she had led must for ever stand between them, and yet that the woman, who could be nothing to him any more, must for ever stand between him and the one who asked no dearer blessing than to be for ever by his side in weal or woe—all this was bad enough. But to think of the wife that once had been, coming to a cruel and shameful death; to feel that if he dared stretch out his hand and pluck the flower of happiness—he must needs cull it beneath the black shadow of the gallows—was not this enough to make the brain reel and the heart fail?

Night and day, day and night had we watched beside him; and when I say "we," I do not use it to signify only Mazie and myself, and Dumphie. There was no lack of volunteers to tend the sick bed, which seemed like to be the dying bed of Louis Draycott. Bessy had hardly left him since first they found him lying huddled on his bed, with dim eyes that saw nothing, save the weird phantasies of a brain "like sweet bells jangled out of tune."

There could be no gentler nurse than the soldier's widow; and as to George the gatekeeper—I really don't know who kept the gate in these days, but certainly he was always either hanging about the passage, or running on errands for the prison surgeon and the physician from "outside," who were in attendance upon the sick man. Then there was a "tender" from the prison infirmary, a man who had been a "hospital orderly" in a regiment, and seen much service; a man whose hand was as light and tender as a woman's, and whose strong and gentle arms could lift the helpless form upon the bed as easily as if he felt it to be no weight at all. With these—to say nothing of Mazie and her old Aunt Dacie, it may be imagined Louis was well-cared for; prayed for, too. Looking at Mazie, white and wan as one of those predestined ghosts that pass through the churchyard on Saint Mark's Eve, I was reminded of our sweetest singer's words: "Her eyes are homes of silent prayer." Her whole life, her nights, her days, each hour in each were as the strands of the golden ladder that reaches from earth to heaven, by which the soul climbs to the feet of God.

The world is always going round. It does not stop because the "desire of our eyes" is laid low, and our hearts faint within us. Events march with it; and so the day of Rebecca's trial drew on apace, while Louis Draycott still lay wrapped in the dreams which fever brings, and to him day and night were both alike.

I began to think that even I had hardly rated Dumphie at his full value hitherto; at all events, as to his business capacities. He had interviews with lawyers; he obtained an order to see the woman who would soon be put upon trial for her life. Foster Grey, Q.C., evidently thought him a rara avis among business-like men, and almost hinted to me that he would in all probability manage the affair better than poor Louis would have done, his feelings being less acutely concerned, and consequently his head clearer.

The Queen's Counsel came to Louis's room, stood at the foot of the bed, and looked at the restless head still tossing on the pillow; then he turned away, passing his hand across his eyes.

"If ever a soul was ripe for heaven," he began, wringing my hand in his——but I had him out in the passage in the twinkling of an eye, for there sat Mazie by the tall, narrow window, herself in shadow, her hands folded in her lap, her eyes fixed upon the face of the sick man, with the look of dumb love and longing you may see in the eyes of the dog who watches his master.

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After all, a Queen's Counsel is only a man, even when he has on his wig and gown—which Grey, Q.C., had not—so I saw no reason why I should not speak plainly to him.

"We don't want to have to give him bad news when he comes to himself," I said, looking appealingly up into his clean-shaven, clear-cut face.

"I will do my best—I needn't tell you that, Miss Birt — but I am sorry the assizes come so close upon the heels of the inquest. It always makes a jury keener to do their worst having all the details of a thing freshly in their minds."

"Still, you see, she did not mean to kill the girl. We all know that. Louis knew it—and Dumphie knows it—and—all of us. Even the Matron says so; and George the gatekeeper—and——"

He smiled down upon me a pitying sort of smile, took a prompt leave, and strode down the corridor.

Can I ever forget the kindness, and love, and care shown to Louis Draycott, and to us for his sake, during those weary days of watching in the prison? Even the Governor himself came to ask how things were going. They told me he had been a long time in India, where, apparently, he had got so hot that he had never got cool again—if I might judge by his complexion. He looked hotter still, I thought, when he saw Mazie. He took her hand and patted it.

"My dear," he said, "you are a brave lass—a brave lass."

And she, raising her heavy eyes to his, answered, gently:

"How good you were to me that day!"

At which he breathed hard, and went away, muttering to himself:

"Who could be anything else to you? Tell me that—tell me that."

It was strange, indeed, as day followed day, and the time of the trial drew on apace, to see Louis—the one human being most deeply interested in the issue—lying there unconscious of the momentous crisis in his life that was at hand.

"It is terrible to see him laid so low, and yet, how much he is spared!" said Dumphie to me. "Do you know, Aunt Dacie, I think Heaven will give him back to us. It will be only to lose him again I know; and yet, one hardly knew how precious he had grown until one saw him lie like that. It makes a silence everywhere hearing the sound of his voice no more. As I pass down the corridors men come creeping up to me, asking for news of him, speaking in hushed voices, as if, even so far away, they feared to disturb him. There is a little, shrivelled-up creature — a 'cleaner' I think they call him, he tidies up the cells you know—well, he began talking about him yesterday, afraid all the time, as I could see, lest some warder should be down on him for speaking. The tears came trickling down his poor, wizened face as he told me that 'every man and mother's son of them, even to the worst, had had a friend in the Chaplain.'"

It had been a very hard thing to manage Rebecca during her husband's illness; indeed, some days there was no managing her at all. She either lay like a log or raved like a lunatic, while, as to the "locum tenens"—who had come to take poor Louis's work, a well-meaning kind of man, who began to preach to her something after Mr. Candytuft's style, she cried out to him: "Shut up, can't you!" turned her back broad upon him, and would not even look round until he had left the cell.

With Dumphie she was sensible enough; and when they let our Mazie go to her again, she rushed at her, caught her hand, pressed it to her breast, and crooned over it like a woman over her new-born babe.

I knew all this, and recognised my darling's blessed power of influence; but I confess I was not prepared to be told by her, quite quietly, and much as if she were speaking of going for a stroll in Regent's Park, that she had resolved to be with Rebecca on the day of the trial.

"You!" I cried, sitting down with a jerk, and flinging my cap-strings over my shoulders in the excitement of the moment; "it will kill you. All the people staring—the hot, crowded court—the suspense——"

"Oh no, it won't!" she said, smiling a little at my energy. How seldom she smiled now, the poor child! "Louis cannot go, you see, dear, and so I must go for him. Dumphie thinks it right, and so do I."

Of course, if Dumphie thought it right, there was nothing more to be said; still——

Oh the long hours when the brother and sister were gone. Oh the horror of hearing the prison-van rattling over the stones in the court below, and knowing that the wretched prisoner, Louis Draycott's wife, was being taken to her ordeal!

I took my place beside the sick bed. I told Bessy to go out and take a turn about the streets. She was looking tired and wan, poor, kindly soul!—as well she

might, for we could not make her take any rest.

"He stood by me in my trouble, and I'll stand by him in his." That was all we could get from her, and there certainly was no arguing with such determination. But she let me have my own way now, merely flinging a small arrow at me as she left the room.

"I hope you can manage the ice-bag, m'arm?"

"Perfectly, thank you," I answered, with a calm and dignified air.

And then I heard her grumbling to some one outside—George Bramble, if I was not mistaken—about being sent away, and "made a fuss with."

No matter. I wanted to be alone, and I had got what I wanted. I wanted to keep watch and ward in my own way.

My own way was this. First, I saw to the ice-bags, that Bessy had, as it were, flung at my head as she left the room. They must not be allowed to press too heavily, and yet they must keep the poor, aching head—from which the thick, dark locks had been shorn so mercilessly—cool. I felt sure that the sick man's lips were less dry, less black and baked than they had been. I even fancied some consciousness was discernible, as every now and again I passed a moistened feather over them. I fancied they closed upon the feather with a sucking motion. I fancied there was less muttering delirium; that the stillness that wrapped him round was more like sleep, and less like stupor. My heart began to beat a little faster, my old cheeks to flush. Hope is very like wine in its effects when newly kindling, as most of us know who have drunk of its invigorating cup. It seemed natural to go down softly on my knees beside the bed, take the fevered hand in both my own, and pray Heaven that this dear new hope of mine might prove a living thing. I was glad that Mazie was not there to share it, lest it should prove but "a vain thing fondly invented;" but I prayed out of my full heart that it might not be a mere fancy.

When Bessy returned—which was not for an hour or two—I said not a word about thinking that our patient might be "on the turn." The very idea seemed something sacred and precious, only to be breathed into the ear of the woman who loved him. I was not going to take the gloss off it by speaking of it to any one else, not even to Bessy.

She was very good. She got me some tea in the next room, and made me lie down on the soft old sofa by the fireplace—indeed, I think I must have dozed, hugging, as it were, that sweet hope of mine to my breast, for the room was quite dusk and dark, and Dumphie was standing by me when next I remembered anything. I sat up with a plunge. I seemed to have no power to ask a single question.

But there was no need.

Dumphie's arms were round me in a moment; Dumphie's hand was smoothing back my ruffled hair under my crumpled cap.

"The jury brought it in manslaughter," he said, quietly. "The sentence is—five years' penal servitude. Grey managed the case admirably, and Rebecca was very good. Poor soul! she said she would be quite quiet if only Mazie might stand where she could see her face."

It so chanced that the two doctors arrived just as Dumphie had done speaking.

They passed into the inner room, where Louis lay, and there, kneeling by his side, was Mazie. She looked up as we all went in. She had a strange light on her face—a sort of ripple and quiver of uncertain joy.

"See!" she said, "see!" and she passed her tender hand again and again over the hollowed temple of the face that was no longer flushed with fever, but pale and beaded with sweat under her fingers.

The doctors bent over the sick man, turning his face gently towards the western glow that came in through the high, narrow window.

The eyes were no longer half-shut, half-open, misty, dull, unseeing. They were as softly closed as those of a sleeping child, and the long, dark lashes lay against the sunken cheek.

"The turn has come—he will live," said the prison surgeon, and the other bowed in silent assent. As for Mazie, she hid her face against the pillow whereon that dear head rested, and was very still.

An hour later, Louis Draycott awoke from that blessed slumber. He looked up into the tender face that bent above him.

"Is this my sweetheart?" he said.

The look that met his, the smile that trembled on the lips pale with watching, answered him.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 31.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XVII.

BROWNIE ANTICIPATES HER FORTUNE.

"MR. ANDERSON," said Brownie, meeting the Doctor the next morning, "you have not sent the book you promised me."

"No," he replied. "I intended doing so yesterday, but could not put my hand upon it. I have written to London for another copy. But I really ought to administer a caution at the same time, Miss Northcott. Although I set you so bad an example, this is really not a matter to play with."

"If I succeed as well as I expect to do," she said, "it will hardly be play to anybody. In any case it is not play to me."

"You will not succeed," he continued. "Even if your theory is correct—and I do not think it is—mesmerism will not help you to establish it. Miss Northcott, I don't want to intrude, but you have honoured me—and, believe me, I do regard it as a great honour—with your confidence; and I cannot endure the idea of your meeting with such a cruel disappointment as yours must be. Let me beg you to put this unpromising scheme from your mind."

It was impossible that such advice as this should not rouse her fears of failure. But Brownie had become fanatical. Her faith in Clement's innocence led her to believe that a way of establishing it must surely be found; nay, she believed that, Anderson's doubts notwithstanding, it had been found already.

"I shall continue to count upon your help when the time comes," she said.

"It is magnificent, but it is not war," he replied. "I admire your confidence more than I can tell you; but your plan is not practicable. As to my assistance, you know you have only to command my services in any way."

For the next few days Brownie could think and talk of nothing but mesmerism. It was mesmerism at breakfast, luncheon, and dinner.

"Margaret," said Mrs. Northcott one evening, when they were all together, "this persistent talking of mesmerism is not becoming. It is not nice for a young girl."

"I do so long to try my 'prentice hand on some one," was the daring answer. "Let me operate on you, Maud."

Maud declined with a grimace of dislike.

"I consider it an unholy thing to attempt to pry into a person's mind," said Mrs. Northcott.

"Uncle Walter," remarked Brownie, turning appealingly to Mr. Litton, "did not Mr. Anderson tell you it was impossible to pry into one's thoughts by means of mesmerism?"

"Yes, Margaret, I believe he did," said Mr. Litton, stretching out his short, fat legs and rubbing his hands cheerfully.

"As you and Uncle Walter appear so satisfied about it," said Maud — unconsciously playing into her cousin's hands —"you had better pursue the investigation together. You won't mind how often Brownie experiments upon you, will you, uncle?"

"To tell you the truth, Maud, I've had about enough of it," was his answer. "I hate to make an ass of myself."

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"Or to make a horse of a chair," suggested Maud.

"Just so. Why don't you practise on Lion, Maggie?"

The matter was dropped for the time; but the next morning Brownie paid a visit to Mr. Litton in the study, where he always smoked until luncheon time.

"I have been thinking about your gold-mine," she began.

A great many persons thought about the gold-mine—after taking shares in it.

"Yes, Margaret, yes," said Mr. Litton, anxious to hear more.

"I suppose you have sold nearly all the shares?"

"Well, not quite all. A good many—a very fair number. Captain Oliver——"

"Has he bought any, Uncle Walter?"

"N-no—not exactly bought them. But he has interest, you see, and so many of his friends have the principal—at least, they had it."

"I was thinking I should like a few more shares," she said.

"Hum, ha! I think you forget that four pounds per share are payable on application, Margaret. Slipped your memory, eh?"

"I could pay the money altogether, you know, when I come of age——"

"Say the word, Margaret. How many shares would you like, my dear girl?"

"I should like—a hundred, if you don't mind," she answered; and she waited to observe the effect of her words.

"Ah," he cried, jumping from his chair, excitedly, "you're wise in your generation, Maggie. You shall sign the form of application at once, and you can give me the cheque for the eight pounds per share on your birthday; eight hundred pounds, you know, Maggie. Eight hundred, and forty pounds you owe on the others, that will be eight hundred and forty pounds. You see how it is done. Why, these shares will be a nice little birthday present for you, won't it? I tell you what," and he tapped her shoulder confidentially, as he brought his shiny face very near her own, "nobody you know is likely to give you a better."

"Here is one stipulation I mean to make," she said, when the business had been transacted to Mr. Litton's entire satisfaction. "We generally have a kind of party on our birthdays, Maud and I. It will not be a large one this year, but I particularly want you to be here. You will be sure to come, won't you?"

He promised, with great alacrity, adding:

"You think you will get your money to the very day, Margaret? Not that it matters; only business is business, and I was always a beggar for punctuality."

"We will make a bargain," she replied; "but, first of all, I must let you into a little secret of mine. You have not forgotten our talk about mesmerism last night? Well, on the Fifth I want to try some more experiments like that at the Rectory. Mr. Anderson has promised to lend me a book, and you shall read it. He says I shall not succeed, but I am confident I shall, especially if you will help me. You see, it will be a capital way of amusing the people. We must have a few rehearsals——"

"You said something about a bargain," suggested Mr. Litton.

"So I did," she answered. "If you will promise to help me over this little experiment, I will undertake to give you the cheque for eight hundred and forty pounds before I sleep that night."

Her eagerness was so evident, that, if Mr. Litton had not been himself dazzled by the prospect she held out, it must have betrayed her.

"All right, Margaret, it's a bargain," he exclaimed, grasping her hand in his excitement. "I'll do all I can to help you, and you—— But suppose, after all, that you don't get your money on the Fifth?"

"Then I will ask Mr. Vaile to lend me some," she assured him. "If I am alive on my birthday, and you do as I have asked you, nothing shall hinder me from giving you the money."

"Please to remember the Fifth of November," he laughed; "but we won't have any treason or plot, mind, eh?"

"You confounded little fool!" he added, when she had left him, as he tilted back his chair and stuck his hands in the top of his trousers.

Brownie had played a somewhat dangerous game. She did not mind the price she was to pay; the danger was lest the liberality of the offer should itself rouse Mr. Litton's suspicions. Brownie did not stop to think that if he was innocent of the forgery, there was nothing for him to suspect, nor to realise that it was possible for Mr. Litton to be a swindler so far as his mine was concerned, and yet not to have committed the forgery. Her faith in Clement was absolute; and this necessarily implied disbelief in Mr. Litton.

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Hastening to her own room, she threw herself on the bed and burst into a violent fit of weeping.

"Oh, I hate myself; I hate myself!" she cried; "and when he knows he may hate and despise me too!"

Her recent anxiety, the constant thinking of one subject, had reduced her to such a condition that it was easy to break down altogether. But now one of her chief difficulties was overcome, and by holding out this large bait to Mr. Litton, she thought she had made sure of his presence at the appointed time. Anderson had promised his assistance, Clement had consented to postpone his enlistment. But yet there might be accidents; so little was needed to spoil her plans. A slight additional indulgence on Mr. Litton's part, illness on her own, or interference from Mrs. Northcott.

It was a few days after his drive with Brownie, and the day following this interview between her and Mr. Litton, that Clement set out once more for the Nook.

Every morning, since that of his abrupt departure to pursue the frightened Kitty, had seen him at Mrs. Oliver's house, and yet the horse had not been mounted. But on this Tuesday there was every prospect of the attempt being made; and by the end of the week Clement would be free to leave Middleton.

October had just commenced, the lanes were deep in mud, and already his gaiters were spattered when he entered Mrs. Oliver's presence.

She accompanied him to the paddock by the side of the house, and the groom soon brought out the horse; a vicious-looking brute, whose tail tried to hide itself, while his ears were set suspiciously backwards.

"I'll take his head," said Clement to the groom. "You run and stick that hurdle up."

"Beg pardon, sir; but you'll never get him over," answered the man.

"We'll see; you do as I tell you," said Clement, quietly, whilst Mrs. Oliver looked on, quite confident in his power to secure his own safety.

Swinging himself into the saddle, Clement put the horse round the small field at a gallop; after two or three laps bringing him straight at the hurdle.

The animal stopped dead. Again they galloped round the paddock, and once more Clement had all his work to keep his seat when they reached the hurdle. The third time the horse rose to the jump, but on reaching the other side stumbled, and fell on one knee, whilst Clement turned a somersault over his head.

He was on his feet with the reins in his hand in an instant, but nothing would satisfy Mrs. Oliver short of the horse's return to his stable.

"He has already half maddened my husband," she said, "I don't want him to kill my friend."

"He might do many worse things than that," answered Clement. "You saw that he was becoming more tractable. I cannot give him up; the fall was a mere accident. It might have happened to the best regulated horse."

"Then, let me give you some luncheon first," she insisted; and with this object Clement followed her into the house.

CHAPTER XVIII. DISASTER.

Tuesday was Mrs. Northcott's "at home" day, and three o'clock in the afternoon found her sitting with Brownie and Maud in the drawing-room at Eastwood.

A loud ring at the bell caused Mrs. Northcott to start from her chair; which she was about to resume when a housemaid, whose face was as pale as her apron, abruptly entered the room.

"Please, m'm——"

"Whatever is the matter now?" demanded Mrs. Northcott, impatient to hear; but defeating her own end by the interruption.

"Please, m'm, Mr. Clement——"

Maud ran towards the messenger of ill-tidings at once; but Brownie did not stir; sitting there gazing from one to the other in apparent bewilderment.

"Mr. Clement's met with a dreadful accident," faltered the housemaid. "They've laid his poor broken body at Mrs. Oliver's, up at the Nook, and James, as is Mrs. Oliver's groom, is downstairs a-waiting."

"You do not mean to say that my brother is dead," cried Maud, while Brownie still sat as mute and pale as a statue.

The girl suggested the desirability of summoning James, and, after much rubbing of his feet, the groom at last entered the drawing-room.

"The horse fell back on un," was his account. "I knew how it'd be, and told Master Northcott, only he wouldn't be warned. A brute that horse is, begging your pardon, ladies. He reared and then rolled back, with Master Northcott under-

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neath un; and whether he was dead or alive when we picked un up—the missus and me—is more'n I can tell you."

All was hurry and excitement now, and, in less than five minutes, Maud was ready to start for the Nook. Brownie, who had left the room at the same time as her cousin, followed her like a shadow.

"Surely it is not necessary for you to go as well," said Mrs. Northcott; and then, for the first time since the arrival of the ill tidings, she broke her silence.

"I must go," she said, briefly, her voice sounding strange and muffled through the thick veil she was wearing.

A minute or two later they were being driven rapidly towards the Nook, too busy with their own thoughts to make the least attempt at conversation.

Maud had never felt the slightest surprise at Brownie's enthusiasm for her brother; only envy of her capacity for belief in him. But if she could have seen through that veil as Brownie sat so still and erect beside her, she would hardly have recognised her cousin.

For Brownie reproached herself as the cause of Clement's disaster. If she had not months ago persuaded him to remain at Middleton, it could never have happened. Moreover, she foresaw the ruin of all her fondest hopes, just when they promised complete fulfilment.

"The blinds are not drawn down, Maud!" she gasped as soon as they came within sight of the house; and a minute or two later they were actually at the gate, towards which Anderson hastened from the house to meet them.

"I am so glad they sent for you," said Brownie, relieved to know that her cousin was in such good hands.

"How is he?" asked Maud, putting the question which Brownie dared not utter.

"I can hardly tell you. He is one big bruise from head to foot. It is hardly likely he can have come off without internal injury. But it is not possible to examine him yet—until the contusions have gone down a little. He is still unconscious."

"Who is with him?" enquired Maud, as they entered the house.

"One of the best nurses I have ever known," was Anderson's enthusiastic answer.

"Why did they not bring him home—they might have known—they ought to have brought him home!" exclaimed Brownie, almost passionately.

"You forget his condition," said Anderson, gently. "He lay between life and death; to have carried him an extra hundred yards might, for all we can tell, have turned the scale. Mrs. Oliver has been kindness itself; no experienced nurse could have proved more efficient. But of course," he added, "you will not care to tax her in this way longer than is necessary."

Brownie looked at the Doctor gratefully.

"Of course it is my place to nurse my brother," said Maud.

Anderson expressed his approval of this suggestion, and after adding further particulars as to the cause of the accident, looked at his watch and declared that he must be going.

"I shall return in a very few hours," he said, whereupon Maud asked him to accept a seat in the carriage with Brownie.

"But you won't send me away without seeing him!" pleaded her cousin; and after doing his utmost to dissuade her in vain, Anderson led the way to the room where Clement had been laid.

A mist seemed to rise before Brownie's eyes as she entered the chamber, until, seeing Mrs. Oliver by the bedside, her senses speedily returned.

Little did she suspect of how many conversations between Clement and Mrs. Oliver she had formed the subject.

Even in the midst of her agonised grief one thought would persist in obtruding itself, and she most heartily wished that the accident had happened anywhere else than in the neighbourhood of the Nook.

The last hour had been on the whole a happy one to Mrs. Oliver, who had found sincere pleasure in doing her utmost for Clement. Her reputation was a bad one—although it would have puzzled anybody to tell why—and in the sequel it may be thought that she did really deserve condemnation. But the most righteous man has his contemptible moments, and the worst woman in the world may be worthy of Heaven now and then.

Left alone with Brownie, Mrs. Oliver placed her arm caressingly round her waist and led her to Clement's side.

Poor girl! when she looked down upon him whom she had last seen in all the pride of his conscious strength, and saw his bruised face, and heavy, comatose condition, it seemed impossible that he could ever again be the same as the Clement she had known. All her grand castles came

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tumbling about her ears, and their fall seemed to stun her.

"He will never know, he will never know!" she moaned; and, moving quietly towards the door, Mrs. Oliver left the broken-hearted girl alone with him, of whom she had thought so hopefully until now, when Fate itself seemed to be so strong against him.

They found her on her knees by the bedside, and shortly afterwards she was once more on the way to Eastwood, receiving from Anderson such aid and consolation as perhaps no one was better able to afford than himself.

Three hours later, the Doctor was again driving to the Nook. As he alighted from his hired carriage, he narrowly escaped coming into contact with a man at the gate.

"What's up? My name is Oliver—Captain Oliver. Can I do anything for you?" was the reply to the Doctor's apology.

"You can let me in to see my patient, if you will. By-the-bye, if you have only just arrived, you probably have not heard of the accident."

"Is it my wife? That confounded horse, I suppose. I expected as much," and Captain Oliver betrayed not the least anxiety or hurry to enter and ascertain the facts.

"You are right as to the horse, wrong as to the rider," said Anderson.

"You don't mean to say that Litton has been fool enough——" he began, when Anderson, impatient to enter, explained that it was Clement Northcott who had come to grief.

"Why did they bring him here? My house is not a hospital," demanded Captain Oliver, and, too much disgusted to wait to hear more, Anderson hastened upstairs to his patient.

Whilst Maud took up her station by the bedside, Mrs. Oliver had attempted to solace herself with a novel. Her husband entering the room abruptly, disturbed her.

"I hardly expected you so soon," was her not very cordial greeting.

"There isn't much temptation to come home, in any case; and, now you have turned the place into a hospital, the sooner I am out of it again the better."

"If there is no temptation, it is a pity you came at all," she retorted.

"And keep this going for you and your paupers of friends," he said, with an oath. "Your cursed extravagance would ruin a millionaire."

"Which you are not," she murmured, as though she were afraid to speak the words aloud, but yet could not altogether resist the innuendo.

He strode to her side, and seizing the book she pretended still to read, flung it to the further end of the room.

"Drop that tone, Belle!" he said, deliberately. "I came here to have an understanding with you. Things can't go on like this; I want money, and by Heaven I would have bled young Northcott, but for this miserable affair. Has Litton been here, to-day?"

"No."

"Then, just write and tell him to lose no time. I'm not going to let any man play with me. I can spoil his little game, and I will, if he doesn't play fair. I know he's a liar, and I know he's a thief——"

"Your accusation proves him neither the one nor the other," she answered.

"So he has a champion, has he? I'll tell you what, Belle," he added, going close by her side and hissing the words slowly into her ear, "if he would rid me of one drag, I'd cry quits for everything——"

She sprang away and began to pace rapidly up and down the room, whilst Captain Oliver critically selected a cigar from his case, rolled its end deliberately between his lips, and, lighting it, watched his wife with a smile that goaded her almost to madness.

YACHTING IN STILL WATERS.

IN FIVE PARTS. PART I.

THIRTY years ago, the pages of "Punch" were enriched by one of those original ideas which become in the course of time household words, while, as the busy tide of life flows on, both the source and the author are lost in oblivion. It was to the clever and fertile mind of Mrs. Guy, wife of General Guy, and daughter of one of our gallant Baltic Admirals, Sir James Plumridge, that the world is indebted for that valuable but little heeded "advice to persons about to marry"—Don't.

To persons about to yacht, the same counsel is respectfully offered, with probably the same negative result, a trial being in either case preferred. Should, therefore, your heart be set upon yachting,

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a stomach prepared for any fate, either to "labour or to wait," should form part of your personal property, as in small vessels —of which class alone my experiences will be recounted — there is but scant convenience for a square meal till you are safely anchored in port. No one, therefore, to whom a good cook is essential, should think of embarking in a fifteen-tonner; but, with the hope of imparting some small portion of the health and pleasure to others that we get out of our little ship, these experiences are written. To the great majority of women, rough water and long spells of sea-sickness are most distasteful, whereas, when the haven is reached, it is one of peace and happiness. Like the snail, you are always at home, no small comfort in out-of-the-way places. To this species of mariner my advice and experience is addressed with keenest personal sympathy.

The first desideratum is to possess a vessel; and, of course, the really satisfactory thing to do, is to describe and embody your ideas of comfort, and entrust the creation thereof to Mr. Samuel White, at East Cowes, as we did, or to Camper and Nicholson, Hatcher, or men of their stamp, at your own port; but building is quite ruinous, unless you mean your boat to last for weal or woe, as you do your house. An enormous difference exists between the building price and that for which you could sell her the next season. On the whole, in the present depressed state of society, when the old landed proprietors, unwilling to screw their tenants, content themselves with a modest corner of their own house, and put down carriage, yacht, and hunter, while "cotton, worsted, and linen" own the crack racers, it is the cheapest thing to buy what you want. Rows of forlorn little ships, with a figurative broom at the masthead, and their sides hung with aged hurdles, lie thickly in the mud at each yachting port, only waiting for a purchaser at a quarter their building price.

The second, and highly desirable necessity, if not a seaman yourself, is to secure the services of a sailor-man who can take you in and out of port, and knows his marks. You will certainly then be under his thumb to be taken about just where he pleases, while imagining you are pleasing yourself. For instance, if you fancy a cruise to Poole, and he does not find that port convivial, the especial dangers of Poole Bar will be enlarged upon, till all idea of going there is quite driven out of your head. This species of skipper has a very mean opinion of the weather in prospective. The sky is dirty — thick as mustard, first thing, and a gale of wind inevitable—but then, you see, it disconcerts so many of his little arrangements to get under weigh; the coat of the mainsail has to be unlaced; his little bits of rope on the deck come out of curl; not to mention the lot of work entailed upon him by a cruise. So he must be excused if he prefers you to remain in port, where he is idleness personified. The same man at sea can nowhere be beat in knowledge of seamanship, activity, neat-handedness, and endurance.

A yachtsman keeps things clean, to begin with, so does not require those tremendous cleansings that a man-o'-war's-man indulges in, after having reduced everything to an appalling condition of chaos and dirt. It is amusing to see the contemptuous and disgusted expression of countenance put on by a regular yachtsman, when, what he terms, "longshore gents" come on deck in boots and blacking. He looks at them as if they were cockroaches walking about a kitchen, saying nothing, but thinking a lot. A man-o'-war's boat is also his especial abhorrence; dashing up alongside, the bowman sticking a sharp-pointed boathook into the lovely, rounded side of his dear vessel, not to speak of a yard or two of paint, in which you could see your face, nicely scraped off as they finally depart.

When not under weigh, a yachtsman's day is passed in gazing at the sky, and what he terms the "wrack," which means any sort of angry, dark-looking cloud, and observing with keenest criticism the sea, tide, and nautical or unnautical proceedings of his neighbours. Notwithstanding a paucity of occupation, he is a very early riser, getting about as soon as it is light. There he is, with the earliest dawn, buznagging on deck, washing down and scrubbing with a little hard broom that picks all the white-lead out of the deck-seams, and making a to-do enough to wake the dead just over where you are lying, and otherwise passing hours of life in the beautiful early morning, while the "gent," or his "owner," as he terms you, are in your second peaceful sleep. But from the first you have been rudely awakened at the commencement of the skipper's distressing activity. When at last you show signs of life, and look up the hatchway,

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there he is, settled on his favourite "bit," pipe alight, exactly as he appeared the night before. It is then he has so much to say anent the appearance of the sky at break of day. "It has a wicked appearance;" "there's wind in it," or "dirt;" "it's noways promising;" or the morning may be "gaudy," in which case the worst is to be apprehended. I never knew a "gaudy" morning, that is, a most lovely, sunny, hot, still morning, that did not bring forth something undesirable. Now it is that your wary, experienced old hand will prove his value. In the gay inexperience of an unnautical life, such a day would be especially selected for putting forth to sea, jaunty with big topsail, spinaker, or balloon jib, to find, as hours wear on, that the day born of a "gaudy" morning presents a very different aspect later on, and you are glad to get in anywhere, shorn of your flying kites, and drenched with green seas. The old salt, however, knows all this. "Give me," says he, surlily, as if the gift were in your power, and grudgingly accorded, "a nice grey misty morning, wherein to sail out to sea, and plenty of sea-room, and I knows where I am."

To be your own skipper, with a good, clever, trustworthy man in charge, is the most satisfactory all round; but then you must have been bred to the sea, and really know what you are about, not merely fancy you do. It is odd how very seldom naval officers make either good or enthusiastic yachtsmen. They will tell you that they had too much of the sea in youth, or some other futile excuse; but the fact remains, that soldiers, and guardsmen in particular, are the cleverest sailors among our yachtsmen.

The shores of England are generally picturesquely, but most incorrectly represented as hospitable; as a matter of fact that part of the south coast, from the mouth of the Thames round the North Foreland, past "Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hythe, and Dover," up to Portsmouth, is inhospitable in the extreme for yachting purposes; a night on the Goodwin, or a day on the Gunfleet, presenting attractions the reverse of desirable.

Portsmouth Harbour is so full of men-of-war and tenders, that its navigation is only carried on at extreme peril to a small sailing-vessel. An Indian trooper coming out, two or three Ryde and Cowes steamers bound in, the steam-ferry from Gosport, a few ironclads on their way to the measured mile, together with a torpedo-ship discharging her loaded weapons, as practice, as she swiftly steams on, are quite distracting enough, and leave little room if you would escape unscathed. Southsea and Ryde are open roadsteads; Bembridge, Wootton, and Barton, in the Isle of Wight, are pretty, picturesque creeks, but only for small craft, except at high tide, so that Cowes must be reached before a safe haven can be counted upon in all weathers; and then only up the Medina river, where on either side a forest of masts represents our fine collection of yachts, snug in their winter berths.

Cowes Roads, with its hot, five-knot tide, is far from a desirable place to fit out in; but no finer sight of its sort exists than Cowes Roads, on a still night during the regatta week. Row upon row of the best yachts in the world, each with her bright stay-light, the Queen's yachts in the place of honour, with the ironclad guard-ship frowning upon them all. But it is also as dangerous an amusement as you can well indulge in, to trust yourself in a rowing-boat among them. What with the swirling tide, what with tier upon tier of sharp-stemmed vessels, each one right in your way as you pull ashore to the Castle after a convivial evening, fizzing little steam-cutters whizzing past at full speed about a yard ahead, together with the late Cowes steamer backing stern foremost out of the harbour, and a blinding galaxy of stay-lights, it is enough to try the nerves of the hardiest.

Our little fifteen-tonner was built at great cost, and embodied a modest idea of what a comfortable floating home—of course of the smallest dimensions—combined with speed and handiness, should be. A cutter of thirty-six feet over all, eleven feet greatest beam, with a draught of about six feet three inches, represents a good wholesome craft; besides which, her beautiful clean lines, designed and laid down by her owner, make her fast, certain in stays, and able to eat to windward in a spectral and Flying Dutchman sort of way, often perplexing to dull sailers and clumbungies in company. I remember Mr. Milner-Gibson, who was second to none in maritime knowledge and experience, remarking that it was positively uncanny to see our little ship glide past him in the moonlight, while his heavy, wholesome cutter, the old "Resolute," lay motionless with her sails asleep. Volumes have been written descriptive of yachting

under perilous and intensely disagreeable conditions, of hair-breadth escapes, shaving the rocks, ploughing the mountainous waves, shipping green seas, and being generally most miserable, while imagining you are out for a lark. I freely resign such experiences to those who enjoy them — and there are many such — confining myself to the history of all but unknown nooks, far from society and smart people, where the dyker, gull, heron and mallard, wild duck and barrow duck, the latter especially, hatch out their young in the lonely, inaccessible sedge islets, and look knowingly at you as you pass, quite kindly disposed towards you, and all unconscious that you are a destructive animal to avoid and flee from. It seems unfair to harbour murderous intentions towards the swift-winged wild duck that whirrs quickly overhead in the twilight, albeit quite sensible of the succulent addition they would make to an extremely limited larder.

All the winter through, our staunch little craft reposes in the mud, on the right bank of the Medina river, shorn of her glories, but defended against all comers by a fine bulwark, in the shape of a large steamer and schooner on either side. Each sunny winter's day sees her careful skipper —whose advent coincided with her own— on board, lovingly opening her out to the drying air, as if she were a living creature to be tended and cared for. I remember a skipper carefully applying a series of hot linseed poultices to a nasty dent in the pretty, round side of his beloved vessel—caused by a barge running into her at anchor—to "fetch it out," as he expressed it, and with signal success!

The early spring days see our yacht floated out of her muddy bed, and berthed inside some large vessel, secure from the raids of sailing-barges tacking up the river, and other enemies on the loose, where she fits out in a leisurely manner, ensuring a splendid appearance later on. The skipper, a steady, middle-aged man, and a young fellow of twenty, or thereabouts, are, together with the owner, sufficient for a bonâ-fide fifteen-tonner — not a racing machine—supposing the owner to know the stem of a ship from the stern; if that difficult lesson, however, remains yet to be learned, it is a tight squeeze, especially during night-passages, as it entails more watch and watch than is altogether agreeable. Three comfortable beds in the main cabin, two in the fore-castle; a pantry, lavatory, two stoves, a washstand, tub, and lockers for clothes, are the salient points in her interior arrangements. A large booby-hatch, with eleven little windows on each side, and excellent head room — except for giants —enabling a look-out to be kept on all occasions. Pretty carpet, red silk blinds, looking-glasses let into the white-and-gold panels, and nickel silver stove and pipe smarten her greatly. Above all, she is water-tight, and you can defy the elements from a light, airy, and cheerful cabin. Her decks are white, and beautifully kept, their immaculate appearance being particularly dear to the heart of the skipper, who scrubs them himself, from five to six a.m., as aforesaid, with an energy perfectly agonising to the sleepers below. When off for a cruise, two small boats are hoisted pretty high in the rigging, giving her, I am obliged to confess, somewhat the appearance of a donkey with two panniers.

Taking advantage of a light, north-easterly wind early in June, we started from Cowes for our first cruise to Poole, with the beginning of the ebb. Everything being on board, stowed away, and the beds made, there remained nothing to be done but to embark with the day's papers about ten a.m. Our skipper had evidently, for once in a way, a tolerably good opinion of the weather; though opining that, "like as not, it might be paltry later on," as he had the mainsail set and the big jib twisted round the stay before letting go.

With the first of the ebb it is best to keep well inshore, where it makes early, the flood often running strong in the middle of the Solent an hour or more after the ebb has made inshore.

The picturesque towers of Egypt, embroidered with a short mantle of close-cropped ivy, quickly disappear as a new "Briary," rising phœnix-like out of the foundations of the old one, comes into view. From Egypt to Gurnard a rough cliff of clay and briars stretches along the shore. Year by year many yards of the flat, fine grass-fields above, succumb to some mysterious pressure, and large fragments, bearing the trees with them, crumble, fall, and are lost to cultivation. Deep in the valley the red gables of a new Woodvale, clothed in pine, oak, and elm, peep out, soon to be shut in by Gurnard.

Looking behind us, a curious effect of the north-east haze causes the steamer crossing from Calshot to look so low in

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the water as to be almost awash; a brig at anchor has nothing but her masts visible; while several yachts in Cowes Roads are apparently sinking.

Gurnard buoy, swirling and boiling as if over a subterranean fire, is left on the port hand, the cheerful little red houses on shore dotting the greensward. Lepe buoy, on the right, near the entrance to Beaulieu river, has a much more quiet time, backed by the sombre woods of Exbury and Beaulieu stretching away to the New Forest.

Thorney, or Thorness, on the island shore, is a lovely bay, wooded and turfed, with sweet, quiet homesteads, nestling among the great nodding elms. Thorney is guiltless of pier, bathing-machine, vendors of island curios, or any one of the melancholy signs of improvement and civilisation, and will well repay a visit, be it only to enjoy the sight of a place so near the beaten track of the irrepressible tourist and yet unknown and unspoiled. Good landing is not Thorney Bay's strong point. At high water, or till half tide, landing can be achieved on the flat beach; but later, any attempt to do so would be rewarded by finding oneself planted up to the ankles in slippery, tenacious, green clay.

Newtown, about a mile inland, lies low. The tiny river, with its oyster-beds, has a small buoy off its mouth; but is most difficult to find at high water.

Sparsely populated and lonely as Newtown now is, one can scarcely credit that these few fields, and a handful of cottages, once returned two Members to Parliament; among others, John Churchill, the great Duke of Marlborough, was one of the Members, when quite an undistinguished young man; he is described as John Churchill, Esquire, in the old Isle of Wight "Histories," and represented Newtown in 1678.

Hampstead Ledge is passed at some little distance, and now, in the easterly morning haze, Hurst looks like a few white spectres, quivering high in the air, with tall, shadowy sails standing in to Jack-in-the-basket, off the entrance to the Lymington river. The ancient castle of Hurst, now incorporated in a new circular fort, was built by Henry the Eighth—with Calshot and Cowes Castles—out of the grey Purbeck stone removed from Beaulieu Abbey.

We are sweeping down fast now, with a hot tide; Yarmouth has no sooner opened, with the swiftly-steaming "Brodick Castle" rushing in towards the land, than we have passed it. Though possessing a fashionable pier, Yarmouth is otherwise the most old-world, quaintly-governed little town in the kingdom; dirty, but so picturesque. Beyond the nestling homes of Hamond-Græmes and Croziers lie the Forts, huge, flat, red-brick edifices, which strike one as being singularly vulnerable to an enemy's shot. A boat loaded with "gunners"—some uncommonly drunk—was half-way over to Hurst. There is an annual loss of life, in the Artillery, between these two places, that may be counted upon as a certainty. The partly-drunk and wholly inexperienced gunner embarks in a boat to pull or sail across the narrow strip of sea, with probably no thought for the time of tide, or conditions of weather; darkness comes on, and the boat is afterwards picked up, bottom upwards, at Bembridge, Hill Head, or elsewhere, while a cap, or a dead man in uniform, is found buried in sand and seaweed under the walls of Norris or Osborne, and this is all that is ever known of his fate.

The Shingles, a bank of coarse gravel outside Hurst, is much higher than it used to be, being continually heaped up by the prevailing wind.* Three flat-bottomed vessels were lying, in the snug shelter of the lee side, ashore on the bank, to take in ballast, while the sea side was alive with gulls, wheeling, screaming, and moaning as if in pain; but there comes a time when to be ashore on the Shingles in a south-west gale means to be ground to powder.

Totland and Alum Bays—both innately lovely, but spoiled by the devastating feet of long generations of tourists—are swiftly passed, and when the Needles rocks are in one, we are on the "bridge." With a westerly wind and ebb-tide, in a small vessel, the sea on the bridge is comparatively like that off Cape Horn; but no ripple stirs the surface in easterly winds. This over-fall is caused by a sharp ledge of rocks extending from the Needles to Old Harry—the pinnacle rock—off Studland. Geologists say that Christchurch and Poole Bays were dry land, when the Needles passage did not exist, and Hurst was the connecting link between the mainland and the Wight.

* In January last—since writing the above—the Shingles have nearly disappeared; nothing shows above water at any time of tide.

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JOHN ELWES, MISER, ETC.

A MISER is a survival. Everybody will be a survival by-and-by, when, what with 'graphs of all sorts, as much more wonderful than the phonograph as that mysterious instrument is than the common telephone, the world will have been changed out of all knowledge. Then anybody who does anything in the way that was normal in the year 1889, will be old-fashioned, eccentric—in fact, a survival. We shall have got to do everything some other way; in fact, a great many things, now accounted needs of life, we shall not be obliged to do at all.

Meanwhile, your miser has already become a survival. He belongs to a bygone day, a day when banks were as unknown as joint-stock companies; when everybody had to carry about his stock of wealth, unless he preferred burying it in the ground, or—if he belonged to a semicivilised community—storing it up in some temple.

One can understand misers in the days of Cæsar Augustus being numerous enough to form quite a class of the community. Horace spends at least as much satire on them as he does on the fortune-hunters. Society in Rome had several times been hopelessly out of joint. What with the proscriptions of Sylla, and Marius, and Julius Cæsar, and Antony, and the accompanying confiscations, property must have been as unsafe as life itself. Land was worth nothing; for any day it might be "annexed," to form part of a present to a pet legion. Money could not be safely stored in temples, for nobody, except children who were too young to pay bath-money, believed in the gods. The only way was to dig a hole, taking care that not even your trustiest slave saw you doing it, and there place your money-bags, close at hand; say, under the impluvium, or perhaps in the floor of your cubicle, so that, now and again, you might solace yourself by counting your riches. Meanwhile, to disarm suspicion, you would, of course, go about in the shabbiest of togas over a very dirty, threadbare tunic, and would steal the rancid oil out of the lamps to lubricate your boiled cabbage with.

To such shifts were Horace's misers, by stress of circumstances, reduced. They were not survivals. They lived in a time of insecurity. And the Roman soldiers, marching up and down Britain, who left the hoards that we now and then come upon near a Roman camp, were driven to be misers in spite of themselves. Either that, or they would have had to spend every denarius within a week of pay-day on themselves and their boon companions.

Now the soldier in India can send, through the War Office, a pound to his old father; enough to his sweetheart to buy her a new hat; or, if he is married, can assign half his pay to wife and bairns, with the certainty that it will be paid as long as he is alive.

Then, there was no such comfortable arrangement. Poor Colour-Sergeant Twin-Brown (Aquilifer Geminus Fuscus) would gladly have remitted money to the family struggling with poverty in an Apulian mountain village; but how was he to do it? If he entrusted it to the paymaster, it would almost surely be embezzled by somebody or other; if he sent it by some merchant returning to Italy, the merchant might get robbed, perhaps murdered, in crossing Gaul or Germany, and, even if he got to Rome, there were no post-office orders between Rome and Apulia. No; he would hoard, hoping to make a pile by the time he got his discharge. And the accident of his being killed on outpost duty, or cut off by influenza—the Romans did have influenza—or hurried away to a station a hundred miles off before he could dig up his treasure, accounts for some at least of these hoards.

The same in mediæval days, when a serf who had made a little money was fain to bury it, lest his liege lord might playfully begin tooth-drawing or thumb-screwing to induce him to part with the lion's share of it.

The Jews did not hide their money; but that was because they had a system of banking, and could "trust one another's paper," whereas Christians, for the most part, had no paper to trust.

And when you are driven to hoarding you grow miserly, and miserliness, like other "sports," tends to run in the blood.

Nowadays, hoarding is an anachronism. Why should a beggar weigh himself down with a stone or two of sovereigns quilted into his old waistcoats, when he might invest them in Mr. Goschen's Reduced Consols? Why should he wear an old waistcoat at all in these railroad days, when he might take a pattern by one of the most successful of his brotherhood, and keep his "establishment" at Highgate,

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while he himself went down every day to his work in City or West End? And John Elwes, alias Jack Meggot, had no need to stint and scrape; for, a century ago, banks were just as safe as they are now. His was a case of heredity. His mother was an Elwes, sister of Sir Hervey, who was a still more thorough miser than himself. Sir Hervey's father and grandfather had both been spendthrifts. They had wasted their estate, till it only brought in a poor hundred a year. This estate was Stoke College, by Clare, in Suffolk; and, despite "the blessings of the Reformation," a race of landlords, some spendthrifts, others misers, has been a poor exchange for the Catholic "theological training college," of which, by the way, Matthew Parker, afterwards Archbishop, was the latest Master, just before its suppression. Sir Hervey set his face like a flint to free the property, and no doubt his sister helped him. He did it grandly, dying worth more than a quarter of a million. She married Sir George Meggot, brewer, and Member of Parliament for Southwark, and starved herself to death, though her husband had left her a hundred thousand pounds. Her son took the Elwes name, inherited the property, and actually managed to improve on his uncle's example. The uncle had gone pretty far along the niggard's road; and the wonder is, the sorry journey agreed with him, for, though when a lad he was given over by the doctors as hopelessly consumptive, he lived to nearly ninety, never tasting flesh meat, save in the form of partridges, of which he would take five hundred brace in a season, thus feeding his whole household, a man, and two maid-servants. Partridge-setting was his one amusement — next to counting over his money. He had a splendid breed of dogs; and, dogs and all, his expenses were limited to a hundred guineas a year. So it may well be imagined that Stoke was not in the best of repair. Indeed, when his nephew first visited him, he was woke by the rain dropping in through the ceiling. He shifted the bed half-a-dozen times, and at last found a tolerably dry place. "Ay, ay," said the uncle, when he told him about it next morning. "I don't mind it myself; but to those who do, that's a nice quarter in the rain."

A queer figure the uncle must have been in his old black velvet cap, worn-out full-dress suit, old great-coat, and grey darned worsted stockings drawn up over his knees. On his thoroughbred, as lean as himself, he looked as if a gust of wind would blow horse and rider away.

His nephew, who, as we shall see, began life quite differently, fell in with his humour; and, whenever he went to see him, would stop at a little inn at Chelmsford and dress himself in threadbare rags, taking care, too, to get a good dinner at a friend's, so that instead of alarming his uncle by his naturally very large appetite, he might please him by the small amount he ate.

Seldom going to London, Sir Hervey always had a great deal of money in the house, and hence was fair game for the burglar, even in those green and sallet days of that now fully-developed artist. The "Thackstead gang" determined to pay him a visit, and timed themselves to his bed hour — eight o'clock, to save candle — hiding in the church-porch till his man had gone to the horses. Him they gagged, and then ran round to the house, tied the maids back to back, burst into Sir Hervey's room, and, with pistols presented, demanded his cash.

"I'll not speak to you till you tell me what you've done to my man. He's been with me forty years, and I love him."

"Oh, he's safe, take our word for that. All we've done is to stop him from giving the alarm."

He then gave them his desk-key. In a drawer they found fifty guineas.

"We want more. We know pretty well how much you've got; and if you don't hand it over, we shall unfortunately have to use these pistols."

So he showed the rest—some say seven hundred and twenty, others more than two thousand seven hundred guineas. What the amount was nobody ever knew, for Elwes would never talk about it.

"Now, don't you stir till we are clear off. If you do, one of us, who will stay behind on purpose, will pistol you, that's all."

"Gentlemen," replied Elwes, pulling out his watch, "I don't want to capture any of you, but I do want to see how my man is going on. You see that watch? In twenty minutes I shall go round to my stables, pistol or no pistol."

The men did not take his watch; and, when the time had expired, he went and untied his man.

Years afterwards the gang was taken up for some other robbery.

"Go and identify them," urged his lawyer.

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"Not I; I've lost my money, and you want me to lose my time also."

This man-servant, by the way, was his chief and only mourner, after a lying in state of which the tenants said: "It's well Sir Hervey can't see all the money that's being spent on him now he's gone." "A farm and fifty pounds a year to him and to his heirs" could not fail to secure at any rate the semblance of grief.

Some of Elwes' neighbours were nearly as niggardly as himself. There was a club in Stoke, and sometimes he and Sir Cordwell Firebras and Sir John Barnardiston met there, but always had a dispute about the reckoning.

"Do come upstairs and help us," shouted a member out of the club window one day that the contest was sharper than usual. "Here are three baronets, worth a million of money, ready to tear each other to pieces for a farthing."

About one of whom it was said, "Nobody would live with him if they could, or could if they would," who got his clothes out of an old chest of his grandfather's, and who on wet days would walk up and down his hall for hours "to save fire," a luxury which he also denied himself at meal times—"The exercise of eating," he argued, "ought to be enough to keep one warm"—the Elwes's biographer, Edward Topham, Esq., late Captain in the second troop of Horse Guards and Justice of the Peace for Essex and York, says "in chastity and abstinence he was a rival of Sir Isaac Newton," which shows that those virtues may be degraded until, according to the Latin proverb, "the best thing, marred, becomes the worst." Topham wrote in 1790, and dedicated his book to Sir Paul Jodrell, physician to the Nabob of Arcot, ancestor of that Norfolk parson and baronet after whom an enterprising wine-merchant named one of his sherries. Topham, and probably Jodrell also, knew the younger Elwes before he had taken to his uncle's way; for the strangest thing about him is the late developement of his miserliness, as if the air of Stoke had brought out the latent tendency. At school, Westminster, he was notably freehanded; and Mr. Topham triumphantly remarks that Lord Mansfield, when they were boys together, used to "borrow" of him nearly all his pocket-money. He finished his education at Geneva, where the master of the riding-school used to boast that he had three of the best riders in Europe, Sir Sydney Meadows, Mr. Worsley, and Elwes; and of the three the last was the most desperate. While at Geneva he was introduced to Voltaire; and, if any one has seen Elwes's portrait in that "Buck's Anecdotes" which used to be the delight of my childhood, he will understand why Topham says the two were a good deal like one another. Not in tastes—for John Elwes was as little literary as his uncle; in all his houses he hadn't thirty shillings' worth of books all told. His introduction to his uncle must have been a trial after the rough-riding at Geneva. Fortunately somebody warned him to dress in character; and there, after dining off a partridge, a small pudding, and a potato between them, the pair sat, candleless, with one glass of wine passed from one to the other, and now and then, as a treat, a stick or two mouldering on the hearth.

At this time the nephew was a man of at least one expensive taste. He was fond of play, and this fondness he indulged long after association with his uncle had made him a miser. The combination was curious. After playing all night at his club, and, perhaps, losing thousands, or only getting worthless I O Us, he would turn out from the gilded rooms, and wax-lights, and obsequious waiters, and walk, at four a.m., to Smithfield, to meet his cattle, which were being sent from Thaydon Hall. There he would stand in cold and rain, chaffering for a shilling with a carcase butcher. If the cattle were late he would walk on to meet them; and more than once, after sitting up all night, he went the whole seventeen miles to Thaydon.

On horseflesh, too, he spent freely. His horses were the admiration of all Suffolk. He refused three hundred pounds for one of them, and two hundred and fifty pounds for another—vast sums in those days.

With his man, who proved the truth of the adage, "If you've only one servant your work will be well done," he would rub down his horses, and, when they had got quite dry, would turn them out, no matter how cold it was, provided there was no rain. That was the way, he said, to make them walk off their stiffness.

His hounds, too, were the most killing in the county. "If they didn't kill they'd never have a meal," said the wags. In summer he used to quarter them on his tenants; and horses and dogs never cost him, in all, three hundred pounds a year.

Unlike his uncle, he was the most

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courteous of men. No rudeness could ruffle him, no ingratitude make him show annoyance. Once a friend, a very bad shot, peppered his cheek, narrowly missing the eye. Elwes met his anxious apologies with a smile, adding: "I give you joy, my dear sir, on your improvement. I knew you'd hit something by-and-by."

One of his maxims was that "it was impossible ever to ask a gentleman for money," and this led to his losing double at cards, for when he lost he paid, while, when he won, his fine friends scarcely ever paid him. While he was Member of Parliament, too, for Berkshire — put in to save a contested election between Lord Craven's party and that of Lord Abingdon—the sums borrowed of him by honourable gentlemen, who never meant to pay, were very great. A whole drawer-full of I O Us was found after his death; indeed, he left Parliament because he could not help lending, and did not care to lose any more. At the same time he let his London houses fall to ruin for want of repairs, and, when he went to town, lived in any one of them that happened to be empty, instead of going to an hotel.

He was fond of Newmarket, and, hearing that Lord Abingdon had a match for seven thousand pounds which he would be obliged to forfeit, though the odds were greatly in his favour, because he could not deposit the stakes, he offered to lend him the money, and thereby gained him his bet. A friend, whom he had taken with him, at last got so famished towards four o'clock as to hint it was a hungry air.

"Very true, very true," said the old miser. "Here, do as I do," producing a pancake and giving him half; "it's two months old, but just as good as new."

His ride from London to Suffolk cost him twopence halfpenny; that to Marcham, his Berkshire seat, could not be done under fourpence, so Suffolk saw more of him than Berks. His meal consisted of two hard-boiled eggs and some scraps of bread, which he ate while he gave his horse a meal off the roadside grass. He went by by-roads, and, if by chance he came to a turnpike, he would ride over the bank and through a couple of fields to avoid it.

Once, two old ladies came under the ban of the spiritual court—a real power in those days. They were to make submission on pain of being excommunicated, and, as they thought this meant penance in a white sheet, they were in a dreadful fright. By some neglect they had let the time slip by, and next day was the latest date for stopping the sentence. They told their neighbour, and he, always ready to do a kindness, saddled his horse, took his couple of eggs, and riding all night, was in time to notify their submission.

"Dear! how can we show our gratitude? All this trouble and expense for us!" they cried.

"Is it expense you're talking of?" said a friend, who knew Elwes's ways. "Send him sixpence, and he gains twopence by the journey."

Another of Elwes's plans for losing money was rash investments—schemes of the most visionary kind offering twenty per cent.; plans for American "plantations," for Nova Scotian iron mines, etc. Anybody who had a project came to him, sure of success, if he made his advances carefully. Nor were his loans confined to Members of Parliament and fashionable card-players; a little wine-merchant begged him to accept some specially fine wine, and soon after borrowed several hundred pounds. "It is fine wine," Elwes used to say, "for it cost me twenty pounds a bottle."

House-building in London was one of his manias. Great part of Marylebone, Portman Square, Portland Street, were built by him. So fond was he of the work, that he actually voted against Lord North because the American war stopped the demand for such property. In his empty houses he used to shelter—one can't call it live—while Parliament was sitting, and in one of them he nearly died. He had been missed for some days. His nephew, Colonel Timms, could not hear of him at his bank, or at The Mount Coffee House, or at any of his haunts. At last, a potboy remembered a poor old man opening a stable door in Marylebone, and locking it after him; and, having long knocked in vain, the Colonel had the door broken open. Upstairs they heard faint moans, and there, on a wretched pallet, lay Elwes, seemingly in a dying state. A doctor gave him cordials, and at last he said: "I believe I've been ill two or three days. My old woman"—housekeeper, who constantly "kept house" for him—"is somewhere in the house, but I don't know why she hasn't been near me." In one of the garrets the woman was found dead on a rug.

He was not a hard landlord; though, of course, he never would do any repairs.

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Philosophical, too; for when news came that a public-house had been burnt down, "Well, well," he replied, "no great harm, for the man never paid his rent; and I should have hard work to get rid of him any other way."

A strange time in which such a figure of fun, whose grand old green velvet coat, with slashed sleeves, taken out of his grand-uncle's chest, contrasted strangely with the wig—flung away by some beggar—that he had picked out of a rut in a lane, could hold his place as a country gentleman. Thus dressed, he would ride to all the dances within a radius of twenty miles, with his pumps stuck in his boots, and dance away as long and as nimbly as the youngest. The idea of such a man being proposed for one of Lord North's Peers—he who used to boast that his expenses in getting into Parliament were eighteen-pence, the price of the Ordinary dinner at Abingdon! Somehow, his nephew persuaded him to dress like other people when he went to the House, to the great astonishment of his man-of-all-work, who, thinking his master would ride as usual, had cleaned up the old saddles, given the horses a feed at his own cost, and at his own cost put a bit of ribbon on one of the bridles, that "Master might do things handsome, like a Parliament man."

To his great mortification he found his master dressed in a shirt and ruffles and bagwig—both lent by Colonel Timms—that mightily set off the velvet coat, driving off in the Colonel's carriage. "Mayhap," was his reflection, "he do look like a bit of a gentleman. But, Lord love 'ee, he's so altered, no one won't know him." This man-of-all-work answered to his name. Rising at four, he milked, then got his master's breakfast; then in hunting season saddled up, got out the hounds, slipped on a green coat, and rode all day. At night he refreshed himself by rubbing down two or three horses; then hurried in to lay the cloth and wait; then fed the horses and milked; then the dogs; and lastly littered down eight hunters. No wonder he was worn out before his master, who, instead of dying at eighty, might have lived twenty years longer had he not got fretful and worried when the close of his parliamentary life left him with nothing to do. Coming back into Suffolk—he had lived in Berks during his M.P.-ship—he found things quite altered. Instead of smiling at his strange ways, people began to get angry. His servants grew ashamed of his meanness, of his house being called "the parish poorhouse," and of his living off putrid game and stale fish rather than have fresh food killed till the supply was exhausted. No doubt he felt the change, but it only made him more penurious. He actually took to robbing the rooks' nests for firing; and, like some modern millionaires, he had a fixed idea that he should be brought down to his last shilling. Once a visitor was astonished to hear some one prowling barefoot in his room. Starting up, he shouted, "Who's there?"

"Sir," replied the poor miser, "my name is Elwes; I've been so unfortunate as to be robbed in this house, which I believe is mine, of all the money I have in the world, five and a half guineas and half-a-crown."

He died worth half a million, having ridden in his usual style from London to Marcham not long before, and having a fortnight before his death taken a walk of twelve miles.

Among his many eccentricities the strangest is that, having taken to sit with his two maidservants to save fire and candle, he fell in love with one of them, and would have married her but that his plan was found out. The famous velvet coat had long been worn out; and, as he would not buy another, one of his two sons bought one and got a neighbour to "give it him"—the man who had lent thousands, never expecting to see them again, and whose American iron-work speculation had cost him twenty-three thousand pounds, ending his days in a coat given by an almost stranger.

At any rate, Elwes, rough-rider, gambler, independent Member of Parliament, fox-hunter, dancer, was no mere miser like his uncle. How the hereditary taint came out is one of the strangest things in his strange, sad history.

RED ROSES.

Dear, let me linger here awhile,
Lo! we have journeyed many a mile,
That I might see once more
The grey old house where I was born,
And pluck, this sunny summer morn,
The roses by the door.

How rich and red they are! How sweet!
Like those fair blooms that used to greet
My wondering, baby gaze:
Like those I wore so long ago,
At simple feast and country show,
In girlhood's careless days.

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My mother's fingers twined them round
The clustering curls that fell unbound;
My father smiled to see:
Ah, love me! love me, darling mine!
I lost their love in winning thine,
I lost them, finding thee!

It seems, dear heart, but yesterday,
We met in yon lone country way,
And loitered in the lane;
Love struck its magic hour that noon,
Love set our pulses to a tune
Of mingled joy and pain.

How fain we were to learn the song!
Though all too roughly flowed along
The course of true love's stream;
For eyes most dear to me on earth,
Looked coldly on thy modest worth;
Then fled our happy dream.

I found it hard to choose between
Their hearts, that all my life had been
So tender and so true,
And thine, as tender, but untried.
To merge the daughter in the bride,
The old love in the new.

I did not fear to count the cost;
Thy love hath paid me all I lost,
Good measure, brimming o'er;
And yet I see, this summer morn,
Through tears, the house where I was born,
The roses by the door.

Ah, love! thy love is like the flowers,
It fills my life with happy hours,
With colour and perfume;
But if I pull the leaves aside,
I find a grief I fain would hide,
A thorn among the bloom.

Nay, dearest, do not turn away,
Thou knowest all my heart would say,
That sometimes it must ache.
Come where the churchyard grasses wave,
And lay thou on their quiet grave,
Red roses for my sake!

ROUND ABOUT PARIS.

VINCENNES AND FONTAINEBLEAU.

It seems quite according to the fitness of things that one should start for Vincennes from the Place de la Bastille. Even though not a stone of the grisly old Bastille is left standing, yet the open square, with its colossal statue, tells a tale, and we have only to make our way to an adjoining panorama to see the famous donjon reproduced before our eyes—its towers, curtain, walls, drawbridges, and deep, dark fosses—as it stood in the old times. And between the Bastille and Vincennes the connection was close and intimate. Between the two fortresses passed often enough the closely-guarded carriage, surrounded by archers and musqueteers, conveying some prisoner of State from one dungeon to another.

And Vincennes, its castle that is, narrowly escaped the same fate as the Bastille. The same angry crowd that had stormed the latter fortress, gathered once more to continue the work of destruction at Vincennes. To the popular mind, one was as much the emblem of a hated tyranny as the other. But, fortunately, the Château of Vincennes had ceased to be a State prison some years before; and Lafayette, reasoning with the leaders of the crowd, and supported by a force of the newly-established National Guard, saved the ancient fortress from destruction.

And now we have omnibuses and tram, as well as railway, all running to Vincennes. Nothing is easier than to get there; but whether you will see much of the old fortress is another matter. Like our Tower of London, the Château has been at once Royal palace and Royal prison house, and in these latter days has its garrison and its military stores, and forms a part of the scheme of defence for Paris. And thus its accessories are of the rigid military order, and the presence of foreigners and of prowlers around in search of the picturesque is not encouraged. And yet Vincennes is well worth the trouble of a visit, and for those who would explore the pleasant country around, there is a convenient tramway, the line of which skirts the ancient Bois de Vincennes, with its pleasant avenues, its lakes and ornamental plantations. Although called the Wood of Vincennes, it is at a good distance from the Château, and is best reached by alighting at the village of Fontenoy-sous-Bois. There is a racecourse in the Bois, and you may hear the sharp crack of the rifles of those chasseurs who are practising at the butts. And there is a hill to be climbed—the Butte de Gravelle — from which opens out a pleasant prospect of the vale of the Marne; quiet and peaceful now, and full of verdure and freshness, but the scene of desperate fighting during the siege of Paris by the Germans, when under the guns of Fort Nogent, which commands the valley, was delivered one of the fiercest and best-sustained of the sorties of the siege—when the French went nearest to penetrating the cordon of fire and steel which had been drawn around the capital. Then were there bivouacs in the Bois de Vincennes, where trees had been hacked in every direction; but the wood has recovered from its wounds. It is no longer a forest, indeed, but a pleasant park, with grassy glades, gardens, and lakes.

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But when the Château is reached, attention is at once attracted by the fine feudal donjon which crowns the whole mass of buildings. It is the old strong castle of the Kings of France, the chief place of security to which the early monarchs might retreat with their families, and all their treasures, when there might be rising in the city, or rebellion in the provinces, or plots of great nobles to be feared. It is a square fortress of the fourteenth century, with four round towers at the angles, rising to the height of a hundred and seventy feet, with walls ten feet thick, with roofs vaulted and groined, with narrow, corkscrew stairs, badly lighted by loopholes and meurtrières; a very dismal and gloomy abode. The tower has five separate stages, divided by strong vaulted roofs, and with only the winding staircase for general access, although, doubtless, there are secret stairs between floor and floor concealed in the turret walls. The cooks occupied the ground floor, with all the necessaries for the table; for Kings, in those days, did not object to the smell of their dinners—a perfume which must have wreathed up those corkscrew stairs in a very refreshing manner. On the next floor the King himself was lodged, with the captain of the guard always on the watch, and answerable with his life for the security of his charge. The next floor belonged to the Queen and the Royal children, and the Princes of the Royal blood found room a story higher, and the personal servants of the household were lodged next the roof. Beneath the level of the soil were dismal oubliettes and dungeons, and a torture-chamber, where the cries of the victims of Royal suspicion were smothered in the massive walls.

Till the reign of Louis the Eleventh this gloomy tower was the occasional residence of the French Kings. It was then made use of as a State prison. Louis had need of all the dungeons at his disposal. His own sinister abode at Plessis-les-Tours was plentifully furnished with these chambers, as also with iron cages for the most important of his prisoners. These cages were also distributed by the benevolent monarch among his various State prisons. There were some at the Hôtel des Tournelles at Paris; the Bastille and Vincennes, no doubt, had their share, as well as the castles of Loches, of Angers, of Chinon, and the abbey fortress of Mount Saint Michel, all of which were filled with the victims of the King's jealous cruelty.

The Tower of Vincennes has also its associations with the English Monarchy. It was here that Henry the Fifth, the hero of Agincourt, breathed his last; and here his infant son, Henry the Sixth, was brought after his coronation as King of France; the lofty wall of the fortress affording a guarantee of his safety against any attempts of his not too loving subjects. A couple of centuries later, Cardinal Mazarin, who had his reasons for liking to be lodged securely, drew his last breath at the Castle of Vincennes—played his last trick, it may be said, for he died almost with the cards in his hand, the captain of his guards taking his place at his favourite game of Hoc when the viaticum was brought by high dignitaries of the Church.

As a State prison, too, the Tower of Vincennes has interesting historical associations. Here they incarcerated the future Henry the Fourth, after Bartholomew, for the honeymoon of his sinister nuptials with Marguerite de Valois. We do not find that his wife shared his captivity, as was the case with the Prince de Condé and his wife later on. The son of this pair, the great Condé, as he is generally called, occupied the same prison for a time, with the chiefs of the Fronde, some of whom occupied the tedious hours of captivity with books of devotion, while others, with the great Condé at their head, went on dicing, and gaming, and card-playing with even greater zest than when at liberty.

Fouquet, too, made the acquaintance of Vincennes, that unhappy Surintendant des Finances with whom Dumas has made us familiar, and who only left Vincennes to be taken to the Bastille, and then to the solitary fortress of Pignerol, to endure a lifelong imprisonment.

The pioneers of the Revolution were among the latest prisoners of Vincennes, and Mirabeau has somewhere described, from personal experience, a visit to the cachôts of the castle.

Then came the terrible coup which the great Napoleon played against the House of Bourbon, when he kidnapped the young Duc d'Enghien from the neutral territory of Baden. He had him brought before a military tribunal at the Château of Vincennes, and then to the fosse of the fortress, where he was shot down by a firing party, and then hastily buried in a grave, which had been previously dug while the mock trial was proceeding, it seems, close by the place of execution.

The remains of the Duc d'Enghien were

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disinterred at the Restoration, and were reinterred in the chapel of the fortress. This chapel is of itself worth the journey to Vincennes to see, being of richly-decorated Gothic of the fourteenth century, the richness of which is all the more impressive by contrast with the grim military buildings that surround it.

One leaves Vincennes with a certain feeling of relief, not only of escape from somewhat sombre associations, but also from a notion that all the time one is under a species of surveillance, and that an innocent curiosity as to old buildings and sites may be evilly construed by the authorities. A sketch-book would probably conduct one under arrest before the commandant; a note-book might invite the fate of the Duc d'Enghien; and those fosses have a horribly suggestive aspect, as of being carefully shot and carelessly buried, according to the approved recipe for treating spies. So adieu, Vincennes, without regret.

But there is something taking and pleasurable about the very name of Fontainebleau. It would be too much to say that the terminus of the Paris-Lyons railway—from which we start for Fontainebleau—has in itself any particular brightness, or that cheerful thoughts are excited by the gloomy prison of Mazas, with its associations of criminals of the deepest dye, that frowns upon our starting-place. But here is the avenue to the sunny South, to the shores of the blue Mediterranean and the fair land of Provence. The train, as it whisks along, gives us here and there a glimpse of the Seine above Paris, now a quiet yet swift-flowing stream, bordered by the brightest of châlets and country houses. There is Villenéuve at the foot of a charming hill, so new, that it bore the same name in the days of Charlemagne. Then were its hills covered with vineyards, and the monks of Saint Germain had the vintage of them. Then we have Brunoy, with delightful villas and cottages, which should be—and perhaps are—the country retreats of poets and dramatists. And after a short flirtation with the pretty little river Yères, where it skirts the forest of Senart, the line takes a long, straight run across a fertile, undulating plain, and so reaches the Seine again, near the ancient town of Melun, which, in the Commentary that Cæsar writ, is called "Melodunum." Here we are, near the site of grand châteaux of the days of Louis le Grand, the two Vaux—Vaux le Peuy, and Vaux Praslin, the latter being the scene of Fouquet's magnificent fête in 1661, when Molière wrote for him that pleasant little piece called "Les Fâcheux."

Then we reach the town of Fontainebleau, all neatness and propriety, and with the courtly air of the past, although the great mansions of the grand seigneurs have nearly all disappeared. But the air is sweet and pure, with the freshness of the forest; and there is something of the fervid luxuriance of the South in the sunny gardens where grapes and peaches ripen on the walls.

As for the Palace, it is immense, with stately courts and long, magnificent galleries, and suites of fine apartments opening out in bewildering intricacy. Here are grand façades, with vistas of avenues and canals, steep roofs rising over the florid entablatures. Here we should have gilded gondolas, and pleasure-boats with fairy sails, plumed hats, and silken cloaks and jewelled sword-hilts, sparkling in the sunshine; languid beauty gliding gracefully here or stepping daintily ashore on a marble terrace among groups of cavaliers and dames all gaily pranked out in silks and satins. It is to the age of splendid manhood and beauteous womanhood, rather than to the days of periwigs and hair-powder, that Fontainebleau seems rightfully to belong, though it has known these last also, and equally the stilted splendour of the Empire and the timid, feeble revival of the ancient Monarchy.

Then there are the gardens, the pond, and the huge carp of fabulous age, that may have been fed by the hands of la belle Gabrielle, or perhaps of the proud Pompadour, or by the purer, more delicate hands of the charming Marie Antoinette.

Ages before any of these, there was a Fontainebleau, a right Royal seat in the wild forest of Bière. Tradition ascribes its beginning to Saint Louis, the Crusader, who, hunting one day in the forest, lost a favourite hound, which bore the convenient name of Bleau. Long afterwards, the dog was found reposing near a plentiful spring of water, which had been meat and drink to the poor dog for who knows how many long days and nights. The saintly King availed himself of the discovery to establish a hunting-lodge near the spring, which thus became known as Fontaine-bleau.

Bleau may have been a good dog; but antiquarians have discovered a better, and they point to earlier charters, as Fons

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Blaudi, the said Blaudus being possibly a near relation of our King Bladud, whose renown is established among the hot springs of Bath. But the easy critics of the seventeenth century allowed a more taking derivation from a fountain of belle eau—sweet water, in fact—and so the name became established; and in books and deeds of the period the place comes smilingly forward as Fontaine-belle-eau.

Anyhow, the place is haunted with the memory of good Saint Louis; he may be found holding his Court under an oak-tree, dispensing justice to all comers, and receiving all who present themselves—whether gentle or simple. Also we may descry the shadowy form of the saint's mother, equally famous.

La reine Blanche comme un lis
Qui chantoit à voix de sirène.

And if you meet a tall, blonde beauty in the forest, and listen to her seductive voice, perhaps she will lead you to her ruined castle in the forest, and let fall a stone or two upon you, to reward your presumption. As a foil to the Reine Blanche we have also the "grand veneur," a ferocious huntsman, all in black, with a pack of hounds of the same sinister colour, who urges the chase by day among the sequestered rides of the forest, and at night will be seen driving his wild hunt across the flaming skies. King Henry the Fourth, it is said, met the "grand veneur" one day, when out hunting, had the rashness to accost him, and was met by the rudely-uttered counsel: "Amendez-vous." It was noticed, as surely a proof of the character of the black huntsman, that the King, who had probably failed in the way of amendment, soon after fell by an assassin's dagger.

The forest of Fontainebleau lends itself to these legends; being, indeed, as wild and picturesque as is consistent with good forestry. And it has a landscape of its own, with broken rocks, ravines, and grottoes, all carefully mapped out, and with guide-posts and indications at every turn, without which it would be possible to lose oneself in a quite serious fashion. For the forest is fifty miles round, intersected with alleys and rides bewilderingly similar in appearance. That tracks and pathways are there, to take the visitor to every picturesque point of view, is due chiefly to the life devotion, in regard to the forest, of an amiable enthusiast—one Monsieur Denecourt, whose guide-books and plans of the forest are everywhere to be found. The muse of Fontainebleau might rise and sing his achievements, which rival those of the Man of Ross in the way of sylvan embellishment. With frank enthusiasm he carries us to every nook and corner. Here we have the Ravine of the Wolf; yonder the Fairy's Pool, to which the deer resort—deer sadly thinned in these degenerate days; a pool which might have been the scene of the rencontre of Diana and Actæon, the Diane of the silver crescent, more mundane, but at least as cruel. Other ravines there are which recall a landscape of Salvator Rosa, ravines of Franchard and Agremont. Or we may come upon The Oak of Charlemagne, some twenty feet in circumference, the origin of which is lost in the mist of ages—an oak which might have been fully grown when Saint Louis held his rustic Court under the trees.

But the oak forest has left but few of its relics, only to be found by diligent search here and there. Instead, we have the solemn shade of Alpine forest; here and there are thickets of old thorns, of gnarled holly, with bushes of melancholy juniper. The juniper, indeed, is one of the specialities of Fontainebleau; people make little knicknacks of its wood—after the fashion of Tunbridge Wells—and its berries are utilised for conserves which have a reputation of their own.

But whatever way we may take through the forest, we must return eventually to the Palace, which is worth more than a hasty, external glance. With all its magnificent proportions, the Palace grew from the forest, the grand château from the humble hunting-lodge. It was little more than this, probably, when our Thomas à Becket, an exile under the displeasure of his King, found his way to the Court of France, and exercised his episcopal functions in consecrating the chapel of Fontainebleau. It is dedicated to Saint Saturnin, a solitary, melancholy saint, whose little chapels are generally found in wild, secluded spots. In his pavilion close by the chapel, and, therefore, not in the Crusades, as we may have been taught, died Saint Louis, whose last words to his son are thus preserved: "That he had rather have a Scot from Scotland to succeed him, who should govern the kingdom well, than his own son to govern badly." This must not be taken as a compliment to the Scot.

The founder of the actual existing château was Francis the First, who brought

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to the scene all the newest taste of Italy. And in its way Fontainebleau became a great school of art for the rest of France; and we may trace its influence through a long line of artist-workmen and masters of works, even to the present day; and the florid, graceful workmanship of the Exhibition Palace of to-day may own as its alma mater the old Palace of Fontainebleau.

From Italy, Francis brought the most skilful artists to design and embellish his palace. Rosso was the chief, and to him succeeded Le Primatico, with Niccolo dell' Abbate as his assistant. From Rome—and snatched from under the wing of the Pope—came Benvenuto Cellini, with his workmen and appliances, beating out vessels of silver and gold, and forging statues of silver to adorn the palace of the luxurious King.

It was at Fontainebleau that Benvenuto spoke his mind to Le Primatico, telling him that, King's order or not, if he dared to undertake any work that had been promised to him, Benvenuto, he would strike him dead. And the other knew him to be a man of his word, and refrained. It was the Royal favourite, Madame d'Etampes, who protected Le Primatico, and she bided her time to pay out the great Florentine.

It was in the great gallery of Francis the First, that is still in existence in all its richness of detail, but which requires the rich dresses, the sparkling jewels, the elaborately-carved furniture of its period, to set out its full attractions; but, anyhow, it was here that Cellini came to see the King with his newly-finished statue of Jupiter. The gallery was then adorned with casts, just received from Italy, of the great masterpieces of the classic type. The King and his entourage were delighted with the work of Cellini; all but the Duchess d'Etampes, who first chilling the enthusiasm of the courtiers with faint praise, turned to the fine classic models, and remarked how far superior in freedom and grace was the work of a former age, when the sculptor had full competence to mould the beauties of the human form, unencumbered by the formal draperies which perhaps only covered the artist's want of knowledge.

The rejoinder of Cellini was blunt and to the purpose, certainly not a retort courteous; and good judges are of opinion that the lady carried off the honours of the day. There is no means of judging now as to the justness of her criticism, for the statue of Jupiter has shared in the destruction that has overtaken so much of the great artist's works—coined into ducats, probably, and scattered over the wide world.

A few years before the scene just recorded, a strange visitor arrived at Fontainebleau. The Scot had come—the Scot foreshadowed by Saint Louis—not to rule over the kingdom, but to seek a wife in the person of Magdalen of France, the King's daughter. James carried off his bride; but there was no luck about the wedding. The poor girl pined away, and died after six months of Scotland. She was soon replaced by a woman of more robust and vigorous type—that Mary of Guise, who transmitted these qualities, with more than her own beauty, to her daughter.

Another figure that presents itself at Fontainebleau is of the dark and saturnine Emperor, Charles the Fifth, who had sought a safe conduct through the kingdom of his great rival, in order to put down an insurrection at Ghent. Great fêtes were organised for the occasion; but the Emperor was very uneasy all the time, and glad to get away, and no wonder, for all the best advisers of King Francis urged him to seize the Emperor, whose person would be worth half-a-dozen victorious campaigns. But Charles had propitiated the ruling spirit of the Court—the Duchesse d'Etampes—by munificent gifts and chivalric courtesies, and so he crept away with a whole skin.

Later again we catch a glimpse of a more enthralling presence. Francis the First has passed away; Henry, his son, has fallen under the lance of Montgomery, in the hazard of the joust; Francis the Second is King of France, and Master at Fontainebleau, and with him is his lovely bride, Queen Mary of Scotland. But even in this, that seems the brightest period of her existence, her lot is not very happy. There is her mother-in-law to deal with, the Medici, who loved her no better for being the daughter of a De Guise. It had pleased the mother-in-law to assemble a religious conference at Fontainebleau, not that she cared for religion, but that she wanted to play off the Calvinists against the faction of the De Guise. It was always poor Mary's fortune to be preached at; but this time it was a Bishop, the Catholic Bishop of Valence, who gave her a foretaste of John Knox. It was thus he addressed Catherine and her daughter-in-law, in the course of a

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sermon delivered in the chapel of Fontainebleau:

"Pardon me, lady Queens, if I dare to undertake to entreat you that it may please you to order that your maids and all your retinue may sing, instead of wicked songs, only the 'Psalms of David.'"

This was what, in the slang of the present day, would be called a large order, and we may be sure that Mary Stuart anyhow was not on the side of austerity. But soon her reign was at an end at Fontainebleau, and the marvellous fêtes, that were organised under the succeeding reign, were but the prelude to Saint Bartholomew.

Then, after an interval, we have Henry the Fourth and la belle Gabrielle sunning themselves at Fontainebleau, the latter to be succeeded by the legitimate spouse, the sallow Mary de Medici. And when Mary was a widow, it was her fancy to have a handsome and courtly young priest as her confessor, that brought upon the scene of Court intrigue and public imbroglio the smart young Bishop of Luçon, hating the priest's frock, and with all the ambition in the world to be only a soldier, who was afterwards rather famous as Cardinal Richelieu.

The Cardinal appeared at Fontainebleau once more, in 1642, when he was almost dying, and so exhausted that he could not leave his litter, and was hauled into his bedchamber through the window; but he was still able to look after his prisoners, one or two of whom he had brought with him to be questioned with rack and thumbscrew, and then to be executed at leisure.

To Fontainebleau came Queen Henriette Marie to appeal to the Queen-Mother of France for help for the Royal cause in England. But Mazarin was at hand to check any effusive promises on the part of Madame Anne, and the English Queen departed, shedding tears of despair.

From the days of Louis le Grand, Fontainebleau played only second fiddle to Versailles. It was occupied, perhaps, for a few weeks in summer, with the splendid retinues of King, Queen, and mistresses, amounting to some thousands of persons; but, for the rest of the year, it would be solitude—except, perhaps, when some foreign Prince or Princess might be quartered there. Such a guest was Queen Christina of Sweden, who affected a manly habit, and resembled a pretty page boy, with the manners of one, too, swearing and swaggering in the most approved fashion. But there was a tigerish side to her character, as when she had her Chamberlain, the Marquis Monaldeschi, put to death by her attendants, for writing scandalous stories about her to his friends. This murder was done in the "Galerie des Cerfs," now cut up into private apartments.

There is little to be said about Fontainebleau after this, except for a curious scene in 1752, when, in a temporary theatre, was performed, before all the fine ladies of the Court, Rousseau's "Devin du Village," a simple little piece, with tinkling airs and sentimental little songs, while the author—harbinger of revolution—sat ill at ease, in a rusty periwig, among a bevy of fair dames.

Then we have Napoleon and Josephine, for the charming Creole loved Fontainebleau better than any of the other Palaces—and Pope Pius the Ninth, who has a pleasant suite of rooms looking over the park; but feels himself more a prisoner than a guest. Last scene of all, is Napoleon signing his abdication—in the little study, which is still shown, with the very table on which it was written.

All the rest is an affair of yesterday—and Fontainebleau belongs to another age and to other manners than ours. How magnificently lodged were those old monarchs! What a space they occupied in the living world, and how for ages the richest, most fertile land, and the proudest nation in the world served as their playground and footstool! And the vision of fair women who formed the most enticing part of all this grand pageant of centuries—we may ask with the great poet of old France:

> Où sont-ils, Vierge souveraine?
> Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER III.

"GOOD-BYE—SWEETHEART—GOOD BYE!"

A WOMAN with a shabby black dress, clinging shawl, and sharp-cut, hungry-looking face—a woman with a baby in her arms and a child holding on to her skirt, was singing at the end of our road. Her voice was worn and shrill, yet had a

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piercing ring of pathos in it too. Why should she sing that song of all others?

I could not leave thee though I said
Good-bye—sweetheart—good-bye!

How it rang through the stillness of the summer night, still, though so near to the busy heart of London!

Good-bye—sweetheart—good-bye!

I dared not hope that Mazie did not hear. I dared not seek her out and try to comfort her. I could only sit there alone in the dusk, my idle fingers folded in my lap, the hot tears falling down, and that sad valediction ringing in my ears—

Good-bye—sweetheart—good-bye!

To-morrow, Louis Draycott was to go; to-morrow, that supreme adieu that should rend two passionately-loving hearts asunder, must be said.

Many things had happened since that blessed moment when Louis Draycott looked up into the face of the woman he loved, with eyes that once more knew her for his darling: she who had watched, and sorrowed, and prayed beside his sick-bed; she whose heart was so full of thankfulness that words did not come easily in the hour when her prayers were answered.

The life that has been good, and full of active interests, soon rights itself once the hand of sickness is lifted from it. It is your sluggards and your debauchees who make such bad patients and have such feeble powers of rallying.

A fortnight after the doctors pronounced Louis out of danger he was back at his work, full of thought for every one, clear-headed as before the stress and strain of the tragedy, in which he had been one of the principal actors, knocked him over. True, he was pallid and gaunt, and the crisp locks about his temples had grown greyer as though by the work of years. But his step was as swinging and light, his voice as clear and true, his heart as full of courage, his will of energy, as though he had never lost count of the days and the nights, and lain as unconscious as a dead man through ' oth.

They said that Rebecca's joy at sight of him again was wonderful to see—like the joy of some dumb animal seeing its master after long absence. In truth, every soul, bound or free, within those prison walls, rejoiced to hear the firm step once more ringing down the corridors, the kindly, cheering voice greeting this one or that; taking up life once more gladly, since Heaven had given it back to him to do its work in the world, even though that work must be accomplished in loneliness and banishment.

It was a case of "only just" seeing Rebecca, for the very day after the Chaplain resumed his duties, the unhappy woman was removed to Woking, there to undergo her sentence of five years' penal bondage. Once within those dreadful walls, and no one could see her save once in six months, and then—alas! that such things should have to be—only through a grating in the door of the "visiting cell."

She had been thankful to learn that she was spared from the worst fate of all; but never did restless spirit chafe more cruelly and piteously against the bonds and imprisonment that were her doom, than did Rebecca Fordyce Draycott. She had all the passionate love of liberty that one finds in the Arab or the gipsy. Indeed, there could be no doubt that the control Louis had striven to exercise over her in past days had been one of the things most hateful to her, prompting her to rebel against and outwit him. She was like one of those wild creatures you see caged, yet ever seeking some outlet in their prison bars, roaming now to this side, now to that, with ever-moving head and wild, craving eyes.

When they came to remove her to the "durance vile" of a stricter confinement and harder penance, she made of herself an absolute dead weight, first having struggled so violently that the wrist-irons became a necessity. I feel to know as much about it as those who were present, for, will it be believed, that our precious Mazie—stealthy of step, quiet of voice—suddenly appeared upon the scene, caught the fettered hands and held them in a tender clasp, touched the burning brow, smoothed back the tangled and dishevelled hair, and then said, "Come, Rebecca," and the maddened creature, tamed all at once, followed our darling like a lamb, the warders wondering, as well they might, at the strange drama enacted before their eyes.

Talk of prison rules, or rules of any kind, there are some women born into the world whose fate it is to set all rules at defiance; women who have a mesmeric power over the wills of others, and of these, Mazie was one. She seemed to hold that scarlet-faced Governor in her soft, pliant hand, and turn and twist him as she would.

When any one remonstrated with her

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about anything she did "inside," she always had a neatly-folded "order," signed with his name, to produce from her little side-pocket.

Still with her hand on Rebecca's, she led the way to where, at the postern, Black Maria was waiting for its freight of misery.

"I shall come and see you as soon as they will let me—in six months from now —you will remember that?" she said, as they passed the inner gate and entered the arched passage leading to the street.

"Yes, yes," answered Rebecca, clinging to the hand that held her as well as her manacled wrists would let her; "I'll do it out in days, and count them off as they go by. A——h!" with a long-drawn breath like a sigh, "there is Louis!"

Between them they quieted and comforted her as best they could, the rest gazing pitifully at the gaunt form and pallid face of the Chaplain but newly risen from his bed of pain. They held her back, as, catching the roll and roar of the street traffic, she strained herself forward to look at the world "outside," where men and women walked about and were free—free —free!

"Get in quietly," said the Chaplain, in a low, even voice that told of a bitter tumult of feeling sternly repressed, "and I will ask them to remove the irons."

Rebecca lifted her shackled hands with a supreme gesture of despair.

"Yes," she said, with a hard, dry, eager sob, "take them off—take them off! I will not stir."

Louis spoke to the warder in charge, who handed him a key, and in a moment the restless hands were free—were clasped long and closely in his own.

"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance and give you peace. . . ."

It seemed to the two standing there side by side—the two so strangely parted, so strangely united by this woman who was "under sentence," that Rebecca, stepping into the van, fell back into the blackness of a living tomb. They heard a slide slip along its groove, they heard the grating and jar of wheels upon the stones, and Black Maria had started on her gruesome journey.

A month after this, Louis was deep in his plans and arrangements for leaving England—for starting to that distant vineyard where henceforth his work for the Master must lie. Then came wearing days of trial; his last service in the grim and desolate prison chapel where the warmth and light of his own earnest spirit had kindled even the "dry bones" to life; his last Communion held for the prisoners, poor souls and sad, standing in desperate need of the "strengthening and refreshing;" last of all, his parting with Mazie. Yes, it had come to that—"Good-bye—sweetheart—good-bye!"

Each morning, as the day of his departure from our midst grew nearer and nearer, I seemed, on opening my eyes, to feel a great black cloud gather over and close in upon me. Each day I wondered more and more at the marvellous gift of courage love can bestow even upon a weak and tender woman. Mazie's eyes were strangely bright in those terrible days; her smile ready, if tremulous.

"We must be strong for him," she would say to Dumphie and myself; and, God knows, it was a pitiful sight enough to see the struggle between her clinging, passionate regret, and her resolve to beat it down as much as possible, so as to spare him she loved all the pain she could. She said little to either of us as to what she felt and suffered. Indeed, we were rather silent when Louis was not with us. It was as though that ominous hush that precedes a storm were over us. But the night before the day that was to rend two lives in twain, my darling came to me. It was a sultry August night, and outside the moon rode high in a clear, purple sky. No breeze stirred the hanging leaves of the poplar-tree, nor ruffled the tendrils of the Virginian creeper that had stretched out its long arms and garlanded my window. And there, beside my bed, stood Mazie, framed in the silver flood of light that came through my open window. Her hair floated over her shoulders, a bright brown cloud of rippling beauty; her face was white as her limp, clinging gown, her hands wrung the one in the other.

"Did you hear that woman singing, Aunt Dacie?" she said. "Her song might have been for Louis and for me—'Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye.' 'Is that my sweetheart?' he said, and looked at me with eyes that knew me—eyes so tender and so sweet, they pierced to my very soul. I was so thankful, I could not speak, I could not pray. But God can read the heart. He knew how thankful I was for His great gift to me of that sweet moment. He knew. . . ."

"Yes, my dear, I am sure He did. Oh, Mazie, Mazie, my blessed, darling child!"

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That was all I could find to say, silly old woman that I was. There never was such a useless old reed, I should think, for any one to lean upon. But oh, how my heart yearned over the child—Lucille's child—the child of the love that was so short and so sweet, and whose pathos and intensity seemed to have its fittest outcome in this girl-heart, at once faithful and tender!

"Aunt Dacie," said the sweet voice at my side, "you must not cry for me like that, or you will make me cry for myself. The time to weep is not yet; that will come when the days without him are empty, and every moment takes him further from us. You must not break me down, dear, you must not; I am weak to-night; the nearness of the parting stifles me. You must help me; you know you always have, ever since I was a little, helpless baby, lying in the cot that mother made, and you peeped at me through the curtains."

She sat upon the edge of the bed, and wiped away my tears, as if I were a child and she the mother trying to comfort it. When I was quieted, she began to speak again.

"It is a hot night, I know, but I am cold—so cold; if I let them, my teeth would chatter; and all the time I seem to hear that woman singing—how sad and pitiful her voice sounded!—'Good-bye, sweetheart——' Oh, Aunt Dacie, Aunt Dacie! how shall I say good-bye to him? Tell me, dear? Hold me close while you speak; hold me in your tender arms. You have often sung me to sleep in the dear old days. Do you remember?

Baby, baby bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting.

It would be no use trying to sing me to sleep like that now."

I held her close, her pretty head drooped upon my shoulder.

"Feel how I shiver," she said, presently; "it is the cold gathering about my heart—the cold that will always be there, when Louis has left me. I know—I know—I must get used to it. There is no way out of it—none! There is a prayer I have to say, Aunt Dacie—to say every night before I lie down to rest—a prayer that Louis has taught me."

"Yes, dear," I answered, stroking her hair, and giving great gulps to try and swallow the lump that kept rising in my throat and choking me. "Tell me about it; I should like to know; perhaps I can learn to say it, too."

"It is this—just three words: 'Fiat voluntas tua.' I am to fold my hands, so, Aunt Dacie. I am trying to say it now, from my heart—but it is hard, very, very hard."

The little clock upon the table by the open window ticked loudly in the silence that followed. It was the same that used to stand upon Lucille's mantelshelf; the same that had rung out to me on that fateful morning the story of her shortlived joy—"never anything so good; never anything so good."

And now, to my ear, it took up the same tale again.

"Never anything so good" in Mazie's life had been before, "never anything so good" should be again, as the love that found its coronach in the words that Louis had taught her—"Fiat voluntas tua." Truly "history," even the history of human hearts, "repeats itself!"

Other fancies, too, came over me, as, in "the hush of the starshine," I held my darling in my arms. Memories of Glennie's baby sayings—a quaint phrase he had to express infinite duration of time, or what seemed so to his little mind—"Longer than years."

Was it for "longer than years," even unto that eternal day when time should be no longer, that Louis Draycott was leaving the darling of his heart, the "soul of his soul," the one woman that for him the world held, or ever should hold?

And for all answer to my questioning came the words, that Mazie's sad lips had but just uttered: "Fiat voluntas tua."

"Let me lie by you to-night, Aunt Dacie. I am afraid to be alone, and I am cold—so cold."

So I held her close, meaning to wake with her; for I knew she would not sleep through the watches of the night.

But old age is feeble, and I dozed off, presently to wake with a start, and find her lying there in the grey, sweet morning dawn, just as she had laid her down, wide-eyed and stirless, with a look upon her face that kept me awed and silent.

I was to wait in the room above, Dumphie downstairs, while the ill-starred lovers bade their last farewell. How our hearts failed us as the hour drew nigh; how we had to live through minutes that were as hours, and hours that took to themselves the guise of days, those will best be able to conjecture who have themselves lived through such a time.

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The inevitable is like death. It is no use either dashing oneself against it, or trying to steal round it. There is nothing for it but to lie down prone and let the water-floods pass over our heads. Presently we shall have strength given us to rise and wade through the torrent. We shall reach the arid and desolate shore of loneliness and isolation; we shall, if we have any grit in us at all, look round and see what work there is to be done, even in the place where

> The sedge is withered from the lake,
> And no birds sing. . . .

But not yet awhile, for the bitterness of death is not yet passed; we cannot see for tears; we stumble as we try to rise.

How I passed the terrible two hours that elapsed between Louis Draycott's coming and his going, it would be quite impossible for me to tell, because I do not know. I really have no notion. If any one had been watching me, I doubt not he would have come to the conclusion that I had taken leave of my senses. Indeed, I don't think I had many senses left to take leave of at all.

I was to see Louis again that night, in fact, with Dumphie, to see him off by the late tidal train for the south coast; but for Mazie the supreme moment of farewell had now come. Louis willed it so; and she knew no revolt from such a wish—assured that what he willed was best for her, and best for him.

The clock of the church hard by, and my own little timepiece, too, had apparently gone mad this jocund autumn day, rich with sunshine that was bright and warm, yet did not scorch or glow—rich with red wreaths of creeper, rosy-tipped and swaying gently in the clear, west wind. They had apparently entered into a conspiracy to strike only once in every two hours, or even more, for surely it could not be only an hour since last they chimed?

Time plays us terrible tricks, and is, after all, only a comparative thing—short when we would fain bid it linger, long when we would passionately beseech it to hasten its laggard steps, and take some pity on our pain.

I know not when or how that waiting of mine came to an end, or what state of dishevelment and abject dejection I was reduced to before it terminated. Looking back upon it now, it is all sketchy—hazy—like the memory of a troubled morning dream. I know that Kezia, faithful soul!—Kezia, with her hard old face, wept into a blurred and swollen condition piteous to behold, put her head into my room, doubtless with the intention of trying to comfort me, or make me take a cup of hot tea, or try some other such feminine wiles upon me; and, after one glance, threw up her hands and fled precipitately. I know that not long after, all those commonplace sounds that are the outcome of the most heart-rending parting, as of the most superficial, resounded through the still and silent house.

The opening and closing of the door of my own little sitting-room, the "heart of the house," as Glennie calls it; a step on the stairs; Dumphie's—only Dumphie's—voice in the hall below; the closing of the front door; the grating whirr of cab-wheels in the little street—all these sounds fell upon my ear like blows. And then, somehow, I pulled myself together, crawled downstairs, looked over the banisters to see Kezia seated on the lowermost step, with her apron over her head, and, then—gently turned the handle of my parlour door, and went in. Mazie was on her knees beside the old nursery couch that stood beside the window. Her arms were flung out, her face hidden upon them. There was no sound of weeping, but every now and then a quick shudder passed over her from head to foot.

Oh, poor, pale lips, where lingered the last kiss of love! Oh, drooping head, where lingered the last touch of benediction! What could I do—a poor, helpless, old woman like me—to comfort such a sorrow?

It was all over.

The last word had been said; the last caress given; the last despairing kiss "plucked the heart out through the lips" that met it.

Surely the shabby, hungry-looking woman should still have been singing out in the now paling sunlight:

> Good-bye—sweetheart—good-bye!

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 32.—Third Series. SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 1889. Price Twopence.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XIX MAUD IS SUSPICIOUS.

During the first week or two of Clement's illness Maud scarcely left his side, and all this time Mrs. Oliver was constantly at hand to assist her.

The constraint which had lately kept the brother and sister apart was now broken down for ever. Under the influence of her sympathy for his suffering, she was more than half inclined to hold him innocent of the crime: putting resolutely from her mind all the evidence which had formerly served to convict him.

Clement's injuries were chiefly external; and there was every reason to hope that his excellent constitution would safely tide over the crisis. At last he was pronounced out of danger.

Brownie came daily to enquire after her cousin; and that was indeed a happy hour when she was once more allowed to see him. But, before Anderson gave this permission, he exacted a promise that, in consideration of Clement's still weak condition, she would make no reference, direct or indirect, to the matter of the forgery.

"You see, Brownie," said Clement, with the ghost of his former smile, "the powers were fighting on your side. I was not to leave Middleton, after all. That is to say, unless I had taken a longer journey than either of us contemplated, and one for which they don't issue return tickets."

"Thank Heaven, we have been spared that, Clement!"

"Yes," he answered, resting his thin hand on hers for a moment, "I am thankful, Brownie. I am thankful now, although, on that morning, I would as soon have gone out of the world as not. But now I feel that I should like to do some good in the world before I leave it—I have done nothing but mischief yet. Sometimes, Brownie, I wish I might make a clean breast of everything, and start anew. Do you know whom I should choose for my confessor? Can you guess, Brownie? Maud has been awfully good to me; Mrs. Oliver, too. But, don't you think Maud ought to be going home again? Mother must miss her. You might take her place; I only want some one to sit with me; I can dispense with a nurse."

He did not say all this straight away, but paused often for rest, whilst Brownie, conscientiously determined to keep her promise, was afraid to interpose many words, lest she should be tempted to break it. But she would smooth his pillow, bring nearer the flowers, or fetch his cooling beverage, performing numerous little acts to minister to his happiness, without trenching on the forbidden topic.

"I am sure that neither Maud nor auntie would consent to that," she answered.

He was easily excited, quickly demanding why she could not change places with Maud, adding, irritably:

"If you can't exist without seeing Litton, you can be easily gratified. He never misses a day. It is the last favour I shall ever ask you, Brownie."

As he lay there so helpless, his mind was ever bent about the future. Anxious, now, beyond measure, to have done with his old life, he looked longingly forward to the time when he might commence a new one. As soon as his limbs would

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support him, he intended to shake the dust of Middleton from his feet. But his limbs were not yet to be relied upon, and he saw no reason why he should not enjoy as much of Brownie's society as possible.

He had no intention of declaring his hopeless love; that was to go with him, unspoken, to be his lifelong companion; all he thought of was present satisfaction, and this was marred by Brownie's reiterated, unqualified refusal to change places with Maud.

When Mrs. Oliver came upon duty, after Brownie's departure, she found her patient considerably worse than he had been before his cousin's arrival, and at once set herself to revive his spirits, as the surest method of increasing his strength. And when Maud entered the room, an hour later, it occurred to her sisterly mind that it would be well for Clement to have a change of air as soon as possible.

She made the suggestion to Anderson when he called the following day.

"You need not be uneasy," he assured her. "Mrs. Oliver, not without some reason, looks upon herself as, to a certain extent, the cause of your brother's accident. She is anxious to do all she can to make amends, and Clement must stay where he is for the present."

It was only natural that Maud's previous acquaintance with Anderson should have ripened into a more or less intimate friendship during these last few weeks. One thing might have been predicted with certainty; the doctor was not likely to hazard his patient's safety by too early a removal from his present quarters.

"I hoped we might have brought him to Eastwood," she persisted; "my mother has given her consent——"

"But you are hardly likely to obtain your brother's. No, no; you must not think of moving him yet. His life is the more valuable now, since he owes it to your care."

"As for me," she said, looking very pleased nevertheless, "I am a mere dummy nurse. Mrs. Oliver is the real Simon Pure."

"Yet you are so anxious to desert her."

While he spoke, Mrs. Oliver's rippling laugh broke upon his ears, and perhaps something that he saw on Maud's face led him to continue:

"I can guess your reason for wishing to remove Clement. You are afraid lest Mrs. Oliver's labour should prove, too truly, a labour of love. But, surely—I am regarding Clement only, not Mrs. Oliver herself—surely he is armed, at least, against any temptation of that kind."

"I am not sure," said Maud, embarrassed by the turn the conversation was taking.

"I am perfectly sure. I don't desire to underrate Mrs. Oliver's charms; but consider a moment. Compare her with your cousin Margaret, for instance."

"I don't think any one is to be compared with Brownie, Mr. Anderson. Especially——"

"Especially to you," she had been on the point of saying, when, remembering herself, she stopped just in time.

"Miss Northcott," he continued, "your cousin is very often in my thoughts. You know that we share a secret—Margaret and I. I am not at liberty even to hint at its nature. I wish I were; but I have endeavoured to persuade her to bring the mystery to an end; and she assures me that, in a very few days now, it shall be all over and done with."

"I am very glad," she answered; but yet her face betrayed no pleasure. "A straightforward course is always the best; don't you think so?"

"No doubt; who can think otherwise, Miss Northcott?" he said, looking at her with astonishment. "Well, I am due at the hospital. I shall have another look at our patient this evening."

The day which Brownie had so long and so ardently looked forward to was, indeed, drawing near. Everything had worked successfully towards her end. Even the invitations for her party had been sent out, and all those, whose presence she desired to witness Clement's victory, had promised to come.

So great was her confidence that, if Mr. Litton had made a full and free confession, she would have been almost disappointed. For, if it were good that Clement's innocence should be proved, it were still better that she should be the one to prove it.

And yet, properly speaking, she had no proof whatever. She had a theory which sounded plausible enough; but of actual proof she had none.

All her petty unpleasantnesses were soon to come to an end. The secret interviews with Mr. Litton were surely numbered. Not much longer would it be necessary to hold a candle to that personage, whose surroundings render so poor a flame contemptible. A little while, she told herself,

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and she would once more be happy and light-hearted as of old.

Other words also, she told herself—told herself when she was quite alone, whispering them even then, and blushing at her own effrontery.

It was a consolation to Brownie that she had bound herself to pay that eight hundred and forty pounds to Mr. Litton. She looked upon it as a set off against the mischief she was so confident of doing to him.

Brownie determined to set her house in order before beginning a new and so important year of her life. Instead of waiting until the fresh month had commenced, therefore, she despatched the page for her banker's pass-book on the twenty-eighth of October.

In due course the boy returned with a large, thick, white envelope, properly sealed and directed to "Miss M. Northcott."

Sitting at her writing-table, Brownie opened the envelope and heedlessly took therefrom the pass-book and a bundle of cancelled cheques much larger than she had anticipated. Looking more closely at these, she perceived that the uppermost one was in Maud's handwriting, and drawn for the astounding sum of five thousand pounds. It was payable to Mr. Vaile; but why should Maud require to pay five thousand pounds to Mr. Vaile?—more especially as, in the ordinary course of things, she would not have had any such sum at the bank, without having first procured it by the lawyer's assistance. Upon investigating further, Brownie discovered that it was Maud's pass-book which had been sent in the place of her own.

She had received hers on the third of October, only a few weeks ago; whereas Maud, probably, had not troubled the bank for as many months; this fact, and some possible confusion on the part of the youthful messenger, seemed sufficient to account for the blunder.

But why should Maud have paid Mr. Vaile five thousand pounds? As Brownie sat wondering how to act—whether to tell Maud of the mistake, or, returning the book and cheques to the bank, to pass it over in silence, a new light broke upon her.

"Dear Maudie!" she exclaimed; and bundling the papers into the envelope again, she went to join Mrs. Northcott.

"Where is Uncle Walter?" she enquired, as the bell rang for luncheon.

"Why do you ask me, Margaret? Your uncle does not condescend to keep me informed of his movements. It used to be quite different. He says he must go to London the day after to-morrow—that will be the thirtieth; and he always stays a week. Why should he want to go to London so often? I am quite positive of one thing—he will never be back by the fifth. Then all my pleasure will be spoilt. Not that that is anything new."

But Brownie was certain he would return in time; if the success of her scheme depended only upon Mr. Litton's presence, she would have been quite confident. Until the last day or two, indeed, she had been quite confident. Now, however, that she could count the very days to the time which was to decide Clement's fate, she could not put aside her anxiety; it was as much as she was able to do to disguise it. More than Mr. Litton's mere presence was needed; and, in consequence, her cheeks were growing pale and losing their curves, she looked worn and tired—not from doubt, but from sheer anxiety.

CHAPTER XX. CROSS-PURPOSES.

THAT afternoon, Clement was to leave his room for the first time since his accident. A few days, and Anderson had promised that he should bid farewell to the Nook.

But Maud had been unable to induce her brother to return to Eastwood. Of course, he remembered all that Brownie had said about proving his innocence, and also that the day upon which she had fixed for the tableau was close at hand. Even while he had listened to her assurances of success, he had built not a single hope upon her words, and now he scarcely bestowed more than a passing thought upon the subject which occupied all her waking moments.

The days that had been so wearisome to Clement in his imprisonment, had been far from unhappy to Maud, who had ingratiated herself with every inmate of Mrs. Oliver's house; always excepting her husband, who, however, may scarcely be so described. His visits were few and far between, but resembled those of an angel in no other particular.

"Anderson promised to come early to-day," said Clement, as he sat in an easy-chair in Mrs. Oliver's dining-room.

A bright fire was burning in the grate, and Maud had endeavoured to make some

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slight return for the kindness of her hostess, by providing sundry feminine nicknacks for the embellishment of the apartment, which had thus lost much of its bare appearance, and now looked cosy and homelike enough.

"It will be almost the Doctor's last visit," answered Mrs. Oliver. "So you really intend all to desert me at once!" she added, looking at Clement, and indulging in a sigh, which, if it began in jest, assuredly ended in earnest.

For she looked forward to the coming separation with unfeigned regret. These three had got along so well together. The past few weeks had been as a brief breathing-space to Mrs. Oliver, an interval in the misery of her ordinary existence. Whilst she was beginning to love Maud as a dear sister, she knew very well that when once she had taken her departure, the relationship must be broken.

"I am sure you will be pleased to see our backs," said Maud; "now that Clement has shaved off that horrid beard, he looks almost like himself again."

Hearing Anderson's footsteps on the path, Clement went to his bed-room, and, after visiting his patient, the Doctor found Maud alone.

"You must be thankful that your journeys here are drawing to an end," she said, as Anderson sat down with the air of a man to whom time was of no importance whatever.

"Why should I be thankful, Miss Northcott?"

Before she could answer, the door opened to admit a servant bearing a letter; the same large, thick, white envelope which Brownie had received that morning from the bank, and which she had redirected to "Miss Northcott" at the Nook.

"Pray excuse me, Mr. Anderson," she said; and, as the servant left the room, she broke the seal of the packet. "I wonder what it can be? It looks like a valentine, only it is hardly the time of year."

With a happy laugh, she peeped into the recesses of the envelope.

"Why ever did Brownie send this to me here!" she exclaimed, and turning the envelope upside down, she emptied its contents on her knees: bank-book, cheques, and letter of explanation.

While she was reading this, an expression of alarm gradually overshadowing her face, the cheques still lay in a small heap on her knees.

"I must wish you good afternoon," said Anderson, rising very abruptly, notwithstanding that he had seemed only a few minutes ago to have an unlimited amount of time at his disposal.

She looked quickly from her letter to his face, the expression of alarm still visible on her own.

"I have advised your brother to remain here until the first of November; that will be next Monday. After that, I do not see the slightest reason for continuing to treat him as an invalid. He can quite well dispense with my services. I am not certain whether he understood—whether I made this plain to him. Perhaps you would be kind enough to mention it."

Maud had taken in the contents of the letter at a glance, and whilst he spoke was busily, and with shaking hands, trying to collect the scattered cheques. Uppermost lay that one to which Brownie's letter referred; and as Maud tried to shuffle it to a less noticeable position, her nervous fingers caught its sides, pushing it so prominently forward that Anderson could hardly avoid reading it now, even if it had escaped his notice before. He made no attempt to assist her, standing looking at her awkward movements until at last she safely collected the cheques in one hand, while the pass-book occupied the other.

"I am sure that Clement—that we all owe you a big debt of gratitude," she said, glad to utter any commonplace to relieve the awkward silence; but he walked towards the door without replying.

Maud had no true reason to be ashamed of anything she had done; but she saw that there was one point of view—which the perversity of fate would very likely cause to be seized upon—from which her conduct must appear at the least unbecoming.

Perhaps, she told herself, as she followed Anderson along the hall of Mrs. Oliver's little house, perhaps, after all, Anderson had not seen the cheque; and more than once she was on the point of speaking to him candidly, but she hesitated, and so her opportunity was lost. A few days, and how bitterly she regretted that hesitation!

Maud experienced an uncomfortable sensation, as though Anderson were looking down upon her from a greater moral height. She instinctively knew that their pleasant friendship had reached its limit.

"We shall see you at Eastwood on the fifth," were all the words she could utter;

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nor were these spoken until he had entered the garden.

"Yes," he answered, facing about. "I must be present on the fifth. I promised your cousin that nothing should prevent me."

And so, without another word, he left her to torment herself with the idea that he was mortally wounded.

Directly after breakfast the next morning, Brownie made her appearance at the Nook; and, no sooner did she find herself alone with Maud than she began a longer explanation about the bank-book than she had ventured on in her letter. To her surprise, her excuses were received with coldness. Brownie felt that she had been snubbed, and was glad to seek refuge with Clement.

"It is good to see you about again," she said. "Maud and Mr. Anderson ought to have a medal apiece; don't you think they deserve them, Clement?"

"Maud ought to have one with a dozen clasps, and, as for Mrs. Oliver, well, I think she deserves two dozen," he answered, warmly. "You mustn't leave Mrs. Oliver out of the reckoning, Brownie. I know I am a brute; I ought to feel grateful to Anderson, and all that sort of thing; but, for the life of me, I can't; and it is no use to pretend I can."

"You would, if you knew all that I do about him," she said. "If you knew what an interest he takes——"

"Oh," exclaimed Clement, "there's no need to tell me in whom Anderson takes an interest; not the least."

And he walked to the window, where he stood gazing at the mist which overhung the meadows.

"Then the secret is out!" cried Brownie, her face all smiles.

"Well, I have eyes and ears, Brownie, and, although everybody wouldn't give me credit for it, a brain as well. There, I know the fellow is a regular brick. It is of no use to struggle against the inevitable. I have learned that at any rate."

"Do you think auntie will arrive at the same conclusion?" she enquired, going to his side and looking cheerfully up to his face.

He stared at her in astonishment; he expected at least a blush, downcast eyes, or some sign of maidenly confusion. But she met his glance frankly and freely, and the light in her own was surely that of amusement.

Clement pulled himself together to meet it with equal self-possession.

"You will find Eastwood a pretty warm place all round, at first," he said; "but, in the end, things are sure to come right. You know, Brownie, I don't think mother would do anything to make either of you girls unhappy."

"I hope not. I don't think she would either," was her answer, and somehow her thoughts drifted away to affairs more particularly concerning herself and him.

"You haven't forgotten about the fifth?" she began, after a long silence. "I want you to be at home after seven o'clock on that evening, Clement. Of course, you intend going back to Mr. Staite's for a day or two."

"Yes," he said, grimly, "I shall certainly go back to Staite's; for how long is another matter."

"Quite," she replied, with a cheerful little laugh. "Promise me not to go out after seven o'clock on Friday, Clement."

"Any one would think you expected a second Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, Brownie."

"No, not quite so bad as that," she said; "but you don't seem much elated at your prospects."

"To be candid, no; I don't see much cause for elation."

"Yet, you may—you ought to be glad. In a few days you will begin a new existence; yet you won't look forward the least little bit."

"Look here, Brownie," he began very earnestly, "I no more believe that your efforts, whatever they may be, can be successful, than that I have not merited all I have to put up with. You and I are playing at cross purposes. You assess my happiness in pounds, shillings, and pence. I don't. Once it was different. At first, just after the dear old governor's death, when every hand was against me, and it seemed that my hand was against everybody's, I longed for nothing so much as confidence and trust. You did trust me; Heaven bless you for it. But now I want something rarer than money or the good opinion of a given number of fools. I cannot have what I want, and everything else may go! Don't misunderstand me," he continued, "I am not going to make an ass of myself. You will all think I am bound for the devil; but wait a few years. You will see me make my way in the world. You shan't be ashamed of me—in the long run. Never mind how poor

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may be the beginning; in the end, I mean to conquer."

They sounded like brave words; it was Clement who spoke them; but it did not seem like the voice of Clement. Not of the Clement she had known. She was stirred with an enthusiasm equal to his own, and perhaps, for the first time in her life, she looked up to him. True, she did not believe his intentions would need to be carried out; but they were, nevertheless, a useful equipment. The same resolute determination to rise superior to circumstances must serve him equally well in any case.

"We will see about it all, after the fifth," she said.

"Ah, Brownie!" he murmured, and his voice was full of reproach.

"Be hopeful, Clement. I mean in the way I am hopeful; hopeful for the success of my plot. It is only until the next time I see you."

They had shaken hands; but still she hesitated, as though there was a weight upon her mind, from which she was anxious to relieve it.

"Clement," she said, coming to his side again; "the money must come first—and —and—there is your good name to think about. But—but that need not be all."

She was gone in a moment, and although he hastened after her as far as the door, it was only to see Kitty tearing along the lane, as if she had run away a second time.

AMERICAN TYPES.

THE trio of cities, situated at that point on the Atlantic coast of North America where the Hudson and East Rivers empty their broad streams into the majestic bay which is the principal portal to the eastern section of the United States, now contain a population of rather more than two and a half millions.

New York and Brooklyn—divided by the East River, but united by the huge suspension bridge, of which everybody has heard—are under separate municipal governments, and Jersey City, beyond the Hudson, is in a state which differs in many respects from the commonwealth of New York. But to the foreign observer, these three cities, were he to pass from one to the other of them, would seem like parts of one grand whole.

Their characteristics are mainly the same. In each there is the same vivacity, the same cosmopolitan atmosphere, the same Northern energy and strength, contrasted with Southern brilliancy of colour and dirt, which characterise the two others.

None of the three are typically American; nor is any one monopolised by the peculiarities of a single nationality. The people who, in New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, correspond to the lower middle-class in London, are the same curious compounds in each of the three cities. They are a kind of composite of Irish, and German, and Italian, and Pole, and Frenchman, with a certain delicacy of feature and litheness of limb, and, it must be added, a swagger of manner, which may be regarded as the American addition to the mixture. They have an accent peculiarly their own, as the London Cockneys have theirs. It is not at all like the Yankee twang of the New England States, nor has it any of the Western "burr."

The shibboleth of the metropolitan cockney of the American world is his enunciation of the letter "t" at the beginning of a word. Note a hundred smart mechanics, small shopmen, employés on railways and tramways, and in restaurants, and on the numerous ferries, which are such important features of life in the great centre, and you will observe that they all enunciate the "t" with the same curious hesitancy—a quaint lingering upon the letter giving to the English word of which it is a component, a kind of foreign air. Add to this a trifling thickness of pronunciation, which is universal in this class, and you have two of their principal distinguishing linguistic marks. "Twenty" is never plain "twenty;" it is "twunty," or "twonty," and said slowly, as if the word came hard.

In a grade a little lower down, where education has had but small chance, there is another peculiarity, which has no existence in New England, and is but rarely observable in the West, that is, the substitution of "d" for "t." Does it come from contact with the German in these great, sprawling conglomerations of population?

I know not; but certain it is that the German immigrant, who fancies with that robust confidence in himself, peculiar to his race, that he speaks English with astounding fluency and correctness, never gets rid of the "d," and goes on saying

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"dey" and "dem," for "they" and "them," to the end of his life.

Remember that these remarks refer to the lower middle class, and not to the highly-cultivated and intellectual classes. Cultivated Germans get rid of the "d." But they never can speak English so but that the moment they open their mouths it is easy to discern that they are foreigners.

I sat in the gallery of the United States Senate when Carl Schurz took the oath, as a member of the Senate, in 1869. He was generally accounted, of all Germans in America, the one who spoke the purest English; and yet, in the pronunciation of the two or three words which he had to say in taking the oath, there were peculiarities enough to prove him a German, had his nationality been in dispute.

To return to the lower strata of the Teutonic stock, the German of direct importation and the German born in America, all keep their national "d" wonderfully well. But that scarcely seems a good reason why an Irish-American boy, an Italian-American boy, a Polish-American boy, and an American-American boy—if you will overlook the expression—of a certain class, should say "der" for "the," "dey" for "they," and "dem" for "them." Yet it is the fact that he does speak in this manner.

A bright, barefooted boy, of seven or eight years of age, jumped up beside me on the open tram-car, the other day, in New York, with his bundle of newspapers under his arm.

"Have you the 'World'?" I asked him.

"Dey ain't no 'Worlds' left; der man in de office wouldn't give me none, anyway," was his excuse.

Yet this was an American-looking child; no trace of German or Irish nationality appeared in his features.

Of the thousands of news-boys who, at the imminent peril of their thin little necks, are perpetually jumping on and off "horse-cars" in the three cities, the great majority speak like this; they grow up speaking so; but, oddly enough, when they reach mature years, and come into more direct contact with educated people, the peculiarity seems to diminish, and in many cases vanishes altogether. But the "roughs" and "toughs" keep it all their lives; and nothing is more incongruous than the spectacle of one of these roughs, attired in the height of fashion, and holding forth in his dialect, which is a picturesque jumble of slang taken from the theatre, the prize-ring, the gutter, the political caucus, and the foreign languages with which he has acquired a "speaking acquaintance" by long contact. That each remark is pointed, or, as we might say, adorned by expectoration, is of course understood. The rough is not alone in the habit of constant expectoration. All the class of men mentioned above are endowed with this villainous habit, which is beginning to be even more nauseously common in France and Italy than in American cities, where it is now so exclusively confined to the class which we have under view. The smoking of very inferior tobacco, and the chewing of the same, accounts for most of it in America. The salivary glands are kept in a constant state of excitement by these odious practices. Chewing is still a confirmed practice with great numbers of these thin, frail-looking young men, who appear as if a wind would blow them away, but who are really capable of bearing any amount of fatigue. Regiments made up from this class during the Civil War, were found to stand harder marching and worse food than the sturdy country boys could endure.

We will leave the "rough" with only one or two remarks concerning him, and pay some attention to the respectable members of the class from which he has fallen. The criminal population of the three cities, New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, probably does not exceed sixty thousand, including these "roughs," some of whom never commit any more serious offence than a breach of the peace. The roughs once terrorised certain quarters, claiming exemption from all operation of law when they were within the bounds of these quarters. They were organised in gangs, and pillaged restaurants, plundered unlucky countrymen who strayed within their reach, and insulted women. When they had become so bold as to constitute a permanent danger, the police department took them in hand, and the process of "railroading" was applied to them. This process consists in bringing up a noted criminal at the morning session of a court, sentencing him in the afternoon, and delivering him to a long term of imprisonment in some State prison during the evening. When this had been done by wholesale, the roughs remaining at liberty consulted together, became more pacific, and did not so openly defy the law. It was altogether too solemn business to

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knock down and rob a countryman in the morning, and in the evening to be serving the beginning of a sentence to "nine years' imprisonment with hard labour" for highway robbery.

When you talk of the lower middle-class, in these great centres of American population, you find that you must immediately begin talking of the "saloon" also; and in the saloon, the "rough" is a very conspicuous figure. There is no class in New York, or its adjacent cities, which corresponds exactly to the very degraded poor, who live in constant misery and squalor in London. The people of whom we are treating all earn good wages weekly, and spend the money in living fairly well, dressing, sometimes, better than their employers, and amusing themselves freely.

If it were not for the saloon—that is to say, if the saloon, with all its odious surroundings and suggestions, could be for ever banished from their existences, their amusements and their lives, in general, would be innocent enough. But the work of abolishing the saloon can only be gradual.

The Rev. Dr. Crosby, of the Presbyterian Church, says that, in eighteen years of temperance campaign work, in New York City, the number of drinking places has been reduced from rather more than ten thousand to rather less than six thousand. Nothing of this has been done by prohibition, which could not be enforced, simply because the saloons control the police.

"Saloon politics" are the most formidable of all the corrupting influences with which those, who have the purity of the ballot at heart, are called to deal. It is in these places that are hatched the schemes for stealing the public moneys. It is the knowledge that the owners of these establishments will nullify all their efforts, which prevents the wealthy and respectable citizens from trying to have clean and well-paved streets, and from endeavouring to reform numerous abuses.

"The New York Post," the leading evening journal in the city, and the representative of the highest culture and literary talent in the country, said, the other day, that "the municipal interests of this vast community are now entirely at the mercy of the liquor dealers and the criminal classes."

This is a strong statement; but it does not appear to be an exaggeration of the truth.

We will next make an excursion into politics. Some day the cultivated and wealthy classes, joining with the vast numbers of orthodox religious folk of moderate means, will succeed in putting down the saloon as an institution. But it will not be until the twentieth century has already well advanced in its first quarter. Meantime, the evil influences are deplorably many. The curious jargon which is spoken by so many thousands of these lower middle-class folk, comes from the saloon.

It must be remembered that a public drinking place in America is not at all like an English public-house. There are no compartments to separate gentlemen from rough labourers. Women are never seen before or behind the bar or counter. The entrance of a woman into a drinking saloon, for the purpose of purchasing a drink, would create as profound a sensation as if a battery were to open fire in the room. The same small shopkeepers and workmen, who consider it a good joke to go home intoxicated to the bosom of their families, would cry shame upon the bold creature, and very possibly the barman might suggest her retreat to a neighbouring restaurant. As for barmaids, that is out of the question. America has very positive notions about that.

The saloon is a long hall, sometimes very elegantly, and always fairly well, decorated, with a bar running its whole length on one side. It is intended as a social and convivial exchange, and as it is the only public resort into which every male person can penetrate unchallenged, and as tradition sanctions fully free conversation within its limits, it is not strange that some very queer language is heard. It is from the saloon that come most of the slang terms which sound so oddly to English ears. Some of them arise from an imperfect knowledge of the English tongue; they are considered amusing, and the newspapers which cater to the public, pick them up and perpetuate them. Thus it happens that a popular journal, printed in New York or Brooklyn, contains columns of words and phrases which would be quite unintelligible to a newly-arrived Englishman, and which he certainly never would hear in the society which he would frequent. The "people" is fond of one or two rough descriptive words which it can apply over and over again to men, and policies, and institutions.

The minor theatres have a slang of their

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own, differing largely from that in use in England, and their actors bring this to the saloon, where it is soon set in circulation. The result of the union of the linguistic peculiarities of the roughs, the cheap actors, the pot-house politicians, and the ignorant foreigners striving to express themselves in English, is a composite speech which is distinctly vulgar, at the same time that it is forcible and direct. A vein of humour twinkles all through it, and from time to time redeems the flat vulgarity. There is no absolute coarseness of expression—there would be short shrift given to that in a country where women do not sink down, as in England and on the Continent, into degradation of the most brutal character, and women would hear it on the street, if not in the saloon.

I find that I have confounded the terms "middle-class" and "people" in the preceding paragraphs, and perhaps that is the very best possible illustration of the position of the class some of whose characteristics I am trying to describe. It is neither people in the French sense, nor lower middle-class in the English sense; it is an admixture of the two. The foreign strain is observable in almost every member of it, in these three cities of New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City. It has not a very extensive acquaintance with the rest of the country, or the history of the nation, or the traditions of its politics; it is patriotic because it is natural to be so, and because every one loves his home best. The Church doesn't affect it much—the Protestant Church not at all; the Catholic only in outward observances. It reads newspapers whose tone it makes; consequently, it knows nothing of the public opinion of the country. It bets on horse-races; makes a hero out of a prize-fighter; spends hundreds of thousands on "base-ball;" and considers the politics of its section as the most exciting topic within the range of the human intellect. It believes that it is superior to the whole exterior world; the insufficiency of its education does not allow it a chance to see how dense its ignorance is; the comparative ease of its material condition keeps down any tendency towards even the lower forms of the ideal. The two intellectual influences which might widen its mind, and save it from many grievous errors—the newspaper and the theatre—are hopelessly degraded to its level. The variety theatre is at the lowest ebb of inanity; its few artistic impulses are embarrassed in a web of silliness. The newspaper goes with the current, and magnifies the very vices which it should correct, or sternly condemn. The visitor from other sections of America observing this class, which certainly forms a majority in the three cities of New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, feels ill at ease, as if he were newly come among foreigners. These are not American ways; this is not American sentiment—these people, with their jargon, have they not come from another planet? Just above them—if we may say above with relation to American sets of population—is a large class of men and women, religious, temperate, thoroughly American in speech and sentiment, with whom the jargon-speakers and saloon-frequenters never come into contact. Neither do they ever appear to meet, or even momentarily to rub against the upper class, as you would say in England, the cultivated, wealthy, and travelled public. The jargon-speaker drives on Sunday in the public parks, the other classes never do. He visits the sea-side, and sometimes attends a concert or a theatre on Sunday. The others consider such conduct profanation. His heroes are not their heroes; his literature is not theirs; he does not hate or envy them; he ignores them. In his group of cities he finds himself a prevailing type; he believes himself the best outcome of American civilisation, and he does not trouble himself about the others. If he thinks of them at all, it is as the Irish in New England think of the Yankees, as "a negligeable quantity."

Reduction of the saloon-power, the introduction of real civil service—without Barnacles—and a reform in the press, will teach this curious international mob its place. But, as we have said, all that work cannot be accomplished until the twentieth century has got well under way. These peculiar people will outlast this rising generation.

IRON CAGES.

A GOOD deal of doubt attaches to the statement of Justin that Alexander the Great, in a fit of anger against the philosopher Callisthenes, ordered him to be deprived of his ears, nose, and lips, and, in this frightfully-mutilated condition, shut him up in an iron cage with a dog—which was intended as a special mark of contumely—but it is known that imprison-

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ment in a cage of iron was an occasional form of punishment among the ancients. One regrets that its cruelly-ingenious inventor's name has not descended to posterity, to be loaded with the contempt and loathing it deserves. An idea so terribly inhuman can have emanated only from a mind accustomed to the sight of suffering, and delighting with a fiendish pleasure in its infliction.

According to Seneca, whose authority is unimpeachable, Lysimachus mutilated Telesphorus of Rhodes, and then, for a long time, immured him in a cage, "like some new and extraordinary animal;" and, indeed, with his head gashed and scarred, and his shapeless body, he retained scarcely a vestige of manhood. Add to this the torments of hunger and the hideous filthiness through which he dragged himself to and fro on his aching knees—what a ghastly spectacle! It was so repulsive as to forbid pity. Yet, if he who underwent these tortures had no likeness to humanity, still less had he who imposed them.

In modern history, the earliest allusion we can find to this punishment belongs to the twelfth century, when Sangjar, sixth and last of the Seljukian Sultans of Persia, having been taken prisoner by the Turks, was thrown into an iron cage (1152). This is the hero who, for his valour, was styled the second Alexander, and whom his subjects so warmly loved that they prayed for him a year after his decease. He was a liberal patron of Persian poetry, and, after a reign of nearly fifty years, deserved a better fate.

From the East, the iron cage found its way into Italy, and speedily found patrons. It was exactly the kind of punishment that suited the revengeful temper and lust of torture of the Italian Princes. Thus, Entius, natural son of Frederick the Second, who was made King of Sardinia in 1258, having soon afterwards been defeated and taken prisoner by the Guelfs at Fossalta, was conveyed to Bologna, and there exposed in an iron cage.

A similar fate befell Napoleon della Torre, lord of Milan, after his capture at Desio by Otho Visconti, January the twenty-first, 1277. He died at Baradello, near Como, after nineteen months of torture.

Readers of Dante will remember the allusion in the "Purgatorio," canto seven, to

> William, that brave Marquis, for whose cause,
> The deed of Alexandria and his war
> Makes Montferrat and Canavese weep.

William, Marquis of Montferrat, was treacherously seized at Alessandria, in 1290, by his own subjects, and shut up in an iron cage, in which he ended his life in the following year. This act of treason was severely punished by the people of Alessandria and the Canavese—afterwards a part of Piedmont—who took up arms to avenge their unfortunate Prince.

To this day the iron cages used for prisoners in mediæval Italy, may be seen in the tower della Gabia, at Milan; in the citadel of Piacenza; and elsewhere.

After the victorious invasion of Scotland, by Edward the First, in 1306, three brothers of Robert Bruce and several of the Scottish nobles perished on the scaffold. The conqueror did not spare even women in his mighty rage, and two of them—the Countesses of Buchan—mother and daughter — were immured in cages of timber and exposed to the ridicule of the populace. It was an act unworthy of the great Plantagenet; but he was then afflicted with a mortal disease, and indignant at the uprising of Scotland under the Bruce.

James the Fourth, last King of Majorca, having fallen into the hands of Pedro the Fourth, King of Aragon, was similarly imprisoned for more than three years.

It was long one of the commonplaces of moralists that the great Turkish Sultan, Bajazet the First, whose magnificence had been the astonishment of European travellers, fell from his pride and pomp of place as a punishment for his arrogance, and, a prisoner in the hands of Timour, or Tamerlane, was exhibited in an iron cage. Gibbon, after summing up the authorities for this statement, accepts it with some qualification:

"Timour," he says, "betrayed a design of leading his Royal captive in triumph, to Samarkand. An attempt to facilitate his escape, by digging a mine under the tent in which Bajazet had been lodged, provoked the Mogul usurper to impose a harsher restraint; and, in his perpetual marches, an iron cage or a wagon might be invented, not as a wanton insult, but as a rigorous precaution. Timour had read in some fabulous history a similar treatment of one of his predecessors, a King of Persia, and Bajazet was condemned to represent the person and expiate the guilt of the Roman Cæsar. But the strength of his mind and body fainted under the trial, and his premature death might, without injustice, be ascribed to the severity of Timour."

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But Mr. Finlay has shown that the word "kafis," which had been translated into an iron cage, really meant nothing more or less than the Byzantine litter, enclosed with bars, and carried by two horses, in which the women of the harem in the East undertake their journeys. So that the world is one "moral lesson" the poorer. Bajazet chose the litter as a conveyance, that he might not be affronted by the gaze of the Tartar soldiers.

Our English biographers of the immortal Maid of Orleans, Jeanne d'Arc—that "light of ancient France"—generally forgot to notice the fact, as attested by Pierre Cusquel and Guillaume Manchon, two witnesses examined at her posthumous trial, or revision of the first trial—that on her way to Rouen she was carried in an iron cage. Their testimony may be read in that valuable storehouse of information, Quicherat's edition of the "Proces de Condamnation et de Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc."

For Louis the Eleventh of France—whom Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Henry Irving have made so familiar to the English public—the iron cage had a great attraction, and he seems to have equipped with it nearly every one of his state prisons. When the Duc de Nemours, previous to his trial, was transferred to the Bastille, he was put in a cage of iron; and the King, learning that some indulgence had been shown to so illustrious a prisoner, wrote in the most uncompromising terms to the Sire de Saint-Pierre, one of the commissaries appointed to try the unfortunate Prince. He was not pleased, he said, to find that the fetters had been removed from the Duke's limbs; that he had been allowed to leave his cage; and that he had attended mass when women were present. And he charged him to take care that the Prince never left his cage, except to be put to the question—that is, to be tortured—and that this should take place in his own apartment. Other important personages, in the reign of Louis, made acquaintance with these iron cages of his; among others, William of Harancourt, Bishop of Verdun, and the Cardinal de la Balue. According to an eminent French antiquary, each cage was about nine feet long, eight feet broad, and seven feet high, and consisted of a ponderous framework of timber, strengthened by solid iron clasps, and fenced in with stout iron bars, weighing altogether a couple of hundred pounds, and costing about three hundred and sixty-seven livres, at the then value of money.

Philippe de Commines, the historian, makes some characteristic comments upon King Louis the Eleventh and his cages. "It is quite true," he says, "that the King our master ordered the construction of some 'rigorous prisons'—cages of iron and of wood, covered with plates of iron outwardly and internally, and with terrible iron bars, each about eight feet wide, and about the height of a man, or one foot more. The man who designed them was the Bishop of Verdun, and in the very first that was made he was incontinently immured, and lay therein for fourteen years. Many of us since have poured our curses upon him; and I, for one, having had an eight months' taste of this kind of captivity. Formerly, too, the King caused the Germans to make for him some very heavy and terrible fetters to fasten upon prisoners' feet, and an iron ring to clasp round the ankle, with a solid chain attached, and a great iron ball at the end of the chain; these instruments of torture were known as 'les fillettes du Roy,' or 'the King's Maidens.' These, nevertheless, I have seen on the feet of many prisoners of rank, who have since risen into great honour and great joy, and have received many favours from the King.

"And now, as in his time, were established these noxious and diverse prisons, so he, before his death, found himself in similar and greater prisons, and also felt much greater fear than was felt by any of his victims; the which thing I hold to be a very great grace for him, and to be part of his purgatory—and I tell it here to show that there is no man, however high his dignity, who does not suffer, either in secret, or openly, and more particularly he who makes others suffer. The said lord, towards the end of his days, enclosed his château of Plessis-les-Tours with great bars of iron, like gratings; and at each corner placed four mantlets of iron, firm and solid. The said gratings were set up against the wall on the other side of the fosse, and there were numerous iron spikes, each with three or four heads, let into the masonry, very close to each other. And, moreover, he ordered ten cross-bow men to be stationed at each mantlet, within the said fosse, to fire at all who approached before the gate was open; and he willed that they should lie down in the fosse, and retire behind the said mantlets of iron. Is it possible," Commines continues,

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"to confine a King, and guard him more closely, and in a narrower prison than he confined himself in? Those cages in which he held les autres, were some eight feet square; and he, who was so great a King, had a little court in the château wherein to take the air; yet he never came there, but kept himself to the gallery, never leaving it, except through the apartments; and he went to mass without passing through the said court. How can one say that this King did not suffer as much as his victims? he who thus immured himself, and was afraid of his children, of his nearest kinsmen? who changed and moved about from day to day the servants he had fostered—the servants who owed everything to him—yet not one of whom did he dare to trust? who enthralled himself in this fashion with such curious fetters and closures? It is true the château was larger than a common prison; but so was he greater than common prisoners." Thus sagely speaks Philippe de Commines.

There is a French tradition that Ludovic Sforza, Duke of Milan, whom the Swiss gave up to the French in 1500, was shut up by order of Louis the Twelfth in an iron cage at the Château de Loches. But the tradition is contradicted by the narratives of several contemporary writers; and among others by Carranti, who, in his memoir of Duke Ludovic, describes the designs and characters he had traced on "the walls" of his prison.

John of Leyden, the leader of the Anabaptists, and hero of Meyerbeer's opera of "Le Prophète," having been taken prisoner at the capture of Munster, on the twenty-fifth of June, 1585, and hearing the Bishop of that city reproach him for the pecuniary losses of which he had been the cause—"I can tell you," said he, "how you can gain much more than you have lost. Let there be made a conveyance of iron, strengthened with leather, and provided with straps, and shut me up in it; afterwards promenade me through the whole country, and when everybody pays you a sou for looking at me, you will accumulate a sum of money much larger than you have lost." The Bishop acted upon a part of this advice; for he sent John of Leyden and two of his confederates from place to place for a considerable period, to be shown to persons who might be willing to pay for staring at them. In the following January John was brought back to Leyden, and, with his confederates, was put to death in the most barbarous fashion.

It was in a cage of iron that Pugatscheff, the impostor who assumed the title of Peter the Third, and made a desperate stroke for the Russian Crown, was conveyed from Jaïck to Moscow, where he was executed on the tenth of January, 1775.

The use of these cages is known both to the Chinese and the Japanese. When the Russian Captain, Golownin, with two of his officers and four sailors, fell into the hands of the latter, these unfortunates were shut up in cages set side by side in the same chamber.

PICTURE TALK.

The English are often reproached with being indifferent to the claims of Art—of Art, that is, in its severest sense—but in these days no one can justly say that they are neglectful of Art Galleries. Almost every year a new gallery is set going, with its own representative school of painters, its own special art tendency, and its own illustrated catalogue—price one shilling. Every year an additional superficial area of wall, covered with painted canvas or paper, has to be gazed at by the ever-increasing London summer crowd; and, at dinner-party or reception, the stream of talk runs yet more persistently upon the merits and demerits of these attempts to reproduce Nature.

After the first week in May, the man who is lucky enough to sit fairly often at the mahogany of upper middle-class dinner-givers; or to spend his afternoons and evenings in drawing-rooms, where music and recitations are provided for his amusement; might, if he were so disposed, write an essay on the prevailing taste in art amongst the picture-gallery-visiting population of Great Britain. A work of this sort would doubtless be most useful; but it would hardly command a large sale on the bookstalls; so our diner-out would probably do better to make an estimate of the educational value of this vast display of pictorial art upon the various schools of taste which may be found within the four-mile cab radius; to discover how much the true feeling for art has been fostered in the average Briton by the contemplation of all the pictures of mark of the year; and to search for any leanings towards certain art heresies which are now rather prevalent—Naturalism, Realism, Impressionism, and the rest of them.

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Kensington and Bayswater, though properly obedient in most things, and ready to run through the gap after the bellwether, assert a certain amount of independence in matters of art, and supply worshippers at all the different shrines of the national art temple. But tendencies towards heresy are very rare. A short investigation will show that the ideas of that great class which — as after-dinner speakers are never tired of declaring — has made our England the great and happy land she is this day, run, as to matters artistic, in rather a narrow groove. It is hard to understand why there should be this unchanged and unchanging adherence to a particular phase of art on the part of these men who, in their own particular line, leave no stone unturned, and every day strike out new ways of trade, so that there may be no corner of the earth ungladdened by grey shirtings or Birmingham hardware. But there it is. To begin with, Art for the class in question means oil-painting and nothing else. At the great Philistine show there are rooms for water-colours and sculpture; but these are never crowded, and the majority of the visitors are those who come to find a seat. Philistia, as a rule, is kind to its votary, and gives him what he wishes to look at — landscapes, with yellowy-green trees, and bluey-grey shadows, with packed-up clouds, and proper sized patches of sky thrown in between. In genre, the poor governess and the fisherman's wife are safe cards. The Irish peasant, at one time, was a great favourite, and it is still almost impossible to overdo the market with the varying humours of babyhood and serio-comic animals.

Portraits must be smooth and pinky—a little extra carnation thrown in for the ladies; and for the men, guns; with fly-books lying about for territorial magnates or apocryphal sportsmen; while, for the frankly commercial, the silver inkstand and the crimson curtain are still valuable properties. Any departure from these canons is liable to cause the picture to be branded as outlandish, or fanciful, and new-fangled; and works to which such epithets as these can be applied, are not often hung upon the walls of the upper middle-class.

But for several years there have been signs that Philistia is uneasy, and this season they point to open revolt within her very walls. Our middle-class gazer, whether he will or no, has to look at landscapes painted, apparently, in soot and water, with skies the colour of the Thames at Poplar; at haggard faces staring out of dreary expanses of grey and dirty-white by way of genre; and at portraits in which the soot has again been called in to denote shadow, and the whitening brush for the high light. The mind staggers in contemplating the result, should this revolt become a revolution; but Philistia will probably be wise in time, and not suffer the eccentricities of genius to check the cheerful flow of shillings at the turnstiles.

When an investigator has turned on the picture tap with the lady he has taken down to dinner, he will discover that there are other critics than the gentlemen who ink their fingers for our benefit in the daily press. It will be a circumstance to be noted if he does not find his neighbour ready to enlighten him as to the merits and imperfections of the leading pictures of the year. Her discourse, on the whole, will give a very good idea of the scope and character of the art of criticism, as it is practised nowadays over the whole range of subjects with which that art is supposed to deal.

The touch-stone by which the lady will pronounce a picture to be good or bad, will be the pleasure or distaste which the sight of it raises in her mind. There is no allowance made on points of technique, concerning which the painter, with his training and experience, might be supposed to know better than the gallery observer after a minute's glance; no reference to principles about which Hazlitt and Lessing have muddled their brains.

Since it is a well-authenticated fact that there are as many opinions as there are critics, it is obvious that the contemporary dinner-table criticism escapes all danger of falling into dismal exactness. It is as variable as the spring climate, and the dining-out investigator need not be surprised at hearing his right-hand neighbour praise a work of art for the very same feature which has earned the censure of the lady on his left.

And here, be it noted, that one imperfection in a work, otherwise perfect, is enough to condemn it utterly. The blot, and nothing but the blot, is the point to be seized; and all the excellences are treated as if they were not; just as our "lively" neighbours, when they sit down to pen their experience after a trip "outre manche," often find

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little to record save the fact that there are sometimes fogs in London.

In vain will you plead that the modelling and flesh tints of a certain lady's portrait are admirable, if your dinner-table critic has discovered that there is anything wrong in the fall of her skirt or the cut of her bodice.

The revolt to which allusion has already been made has been somewhat trying this year to the more rigid sticklers for the old order. Several painters have so far forgotten themselves as to treat good, old, well-crystallised themes in a most reprehensible manner.

There is a "Neptune," for instance, as unlike as possible to that god as he is described and delineated in "Pinnock's Catechism of Heathen Mythology." There he is given as a sort of inferior Jupiter, or an Old Father Thames, who has drifted out beyond the Foreland and got some seaweed mixed up in his oozy locks. Now he is drawn as an Apollo, who has laid down the lyre for the trident; while everybody knows that Amphitrite was not a bit like that lovely young woman on the dolphin beside him, but a plump fish-wife from the Olympian Billingsgate.

Then there is a Diana, a lithe, muscular maiden, harking on some dogs which look as if they meant business. What has she in common with the proper Diana, a smirking plump lady, more like a teacher of deportment than a huntress? It is true that ladies who, being lightly clad, spend their days in hunting, might be supposed to become tanned and wiry; but this is nothing to the point. The artist has drawn Diana as she has never been drawn before, and, therefore, he is wrong.

Almost as perplexing as the mind immovably fixed, is the erratic one which, for some by-reason, takes up with some one or other of those strange amorphous outgrowths of art which are so much with us nowadays.

There is the young lady, one of whose schoolfellows is cousin to a distinguished member of the Introspectionist School, and on this score she, who a little time ago worshipped Gustave Doré as the greatest painter living or dead, can now see beauty in nothing except the canvases of those gentlemen who paint landscapes in orange and purple and vermilion. There is another who goes into raptures over the works of that school of painters who seem to be able to paint nothing but ballet-girls—and such ballet-girls! Dirty faces and arms and legs, stand out painfully conspicuous in a setting of scrabbled white paint, part of it clothes, and part of it background. Then there is the middle-aged lady, the wife of a gentleman in the City, whose sister, the Mayoress of Slagborough, has been painted by young Creamly Skinner; and this fact, in her estimation, is enough to place C. S., who is really an impostor of the Pinckney School, at the head of the masters of portraiture past and present.

By the end of June, our diner-out will have had almost enough of such discussion, and possibly may begin to wish that a new Omar, with an aversion to pictures, and perhaps to painters as well, would arise and repeat on the Thames the Alexandrian conflagration. Such a savage wish, however, would certainly savour of ingratitude. Let him cast his memory back over that series of solemn dinner-parties of the past season, and then ask himself how he would have succeeded in making his store of small talk hold out from soup to dessert without the ever fresh and ever fertile topic of the pictures of the year.

YACHTING IN STILL WATERS.

IN FIVE PARTS. PART II.

WITH a north-east wind bound to Poole, it is best to go out by the north channel, round Hurst Castle, leaving the Shingles and Needles to the left. Far away at sea, long black banks, developing into drawn-out trails of smoke, show where the great hulls of homeward-bounders are coming up from the under world.

The cliffs of the mainland, from Hurst to Christchurch Head, are yellow sandstone, rugged and inhospitable except by land, where Highcliffe and other fine old houses nestle among the trees.

Muddiford — a little bar-harbour and watering-place—is sheltered somewhat by Christchurch Head; the Giant Priory—a splendid sea mark—looming large in the haze over the low land. About here, the spinaker is in frequent requisition, as the breeze becomes flighty out of the bay. At one moment faint ribs of water, exactly the pattern of sea-sand left on the beach by the receding tide, ruffle in from sea, bringing hopes of a true wind, but soon fade away into an oily calm.

Visions of a comfortable dinner inside Branksea Island wax fainter and ever fainter, when the Bournemouth steamer

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comes up astern, her paddles sounding like great churns a dozen miles away. A tow seems now possible; but she passes far inshore of us, takes up her Bournemouth passengers, and fizzes away to Poole—a mile and more across our bows. With her departs our last hope; so, when the latest drain of the ebb is done, we cast anchor in eight fathoms, off the outer Poole rocks, and "wish for the day." From side to side, with wearisome regularity, all through the hours of darkness, we rolled, till the dawn of day, when, getting under weigh, Poole Bar was crossed at a fortunate moment, keeping Standfast Point and Old Harry and his Wife immediately astern. It is, however, only just to state that in twenty-six years this voyage was the only one when we could not get inside before nightfall.

Poole is the shiftiest of bars, always altering the position of its deepest channel; and, as under no circumstances is there more than fourteen feet at high water, the size of vessels entering is much circumscribed.

The Little Sea and Curlew Cottage—newly risen out of the charming, but desolate shore—are the only breaks in the low monotony of the coast trending towards South Haven Point, where the narrow channel between the buoys is still further narrowed by the machinations of the harbour authorities, who began a breakwater here, of all places, and then, thinking better, or worse, of the plan, desisted, and have left a monument of folly and indecision in the shape of loose stones, which require a wide berth to be given them.

The Hook, stretching out from North Haven Point, with a small boat passage between, is a most dangerous shoal. In south or east winds, the sea roars and breaks upon it with such violence that the sound can be heard seven or eight miles away, up in the quiet waters of Wych Lake.

North Haven Point possesses many charms for the unsophisticated, with its bare hotel, exposed to every wind of heaven, the two lights denoting the fairway, and a coast-guard station; albeit, there is a certain sameness in the drifting sandhills, partly clothed with rush and bent, and a few gnarled firs.

The entrance to South Deep is not rendered alluring by a wreck lying head downwards on the steep bank; but we pass on, and are in Branksea Roads.

The old castle of Branksea, or Brownsea, happily survives, to teach our nineteenth century builders solidity and beauty; but, unluckily, Colonel Waugh, a former owner, added on to the stout old fabric a Tudor edifice, which still survives, though quite unfinished.* Still, it has yet great capabilities, and may be made a charming home. The spoils and art-treasures of many nations, chiefly Venetian, find a temporary sanctuary in these rough-plastered rooms. Sculpture, carvings, paintings, tile work, seem surprised to find themselves leaning against the lath and plaster, or prone on the boarded floor. Should anything of especial interest be missing from its place in old Venetian church or palazzo, perhaps a search among the rough rooms at Branksea might bring it to light. Great trunks of curios, for which large sums have been given, await a disentombment when time and chance make it possible. Certainly nobody but the ancient retainer who takes you round, and least of all the learned and accomplished owner, has probably the least idea of what the walls of the castle really contain. A fine hall in the old part is occasionally used for concerts; but otherwise the present lord of the soil—Mr. Cavendish Bentinck—lives in the charming villa clothed with pine wood, formerly intended for the clergyman.

Branksea is a lovely island, from seaward especially; the castle and church nestle so picturesquely under the great forest-trees. Numerous handsome wells from Venice, the Italian statuary, and Roman bath should all be seen. It is supposed that the tower of the castle was built in Henry the Eighth's time; and it was, till the reign of Elizabeth, Crown property. One Mr. Benson, of Poole, the then owner, built the hall about 1730; and Humphry Sturt, an ancestor of Lord Alington, made additions to the castle. Every description of scenery rewards a ramble through the island. There are lakes, woods, lovers' walks, winding drives among the bracken and pines, quaintly named after their owners, besides well-cultivated fields; and the disused pottery works on the south side are quite out of sight behind the fir-crested hill. A real triumph of art over nature is evidenced in the vast tract of over a hundred acres of mud and water, which, about thirty-five years ago, was wrested

* At this moment an army of workmen are actually employed in completing the unfinished part. July, 1889.

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from the harbour and slowly drained. A sea-wall encloses it, and at the outfall two small water-mills ceaselessly twirl in the useful work of reclamation. Black ooze still exists to a great depth; but coarse grasses cover it luxuriantly, and then withering, add a little substance each season. The twined roots of sedges, rushes, and water-plants bind it all closer and closer, till now, after a lapse of years, cattle and horses graze where ships once sailed, and it may be called dry land. Snipe and lap-wing plover, with cuckoos and reed-buntings, are constantly hovering over this reclaimed land, wheeling to and fro in an agitated manner, and piping a lament for their fast-disappearing fens and damp fastnesses. The level of this drained marsh is lower than the water outside, owing to the shrinkage of the soil in drying; a good sea-wall is therefore a necessity. The church dedicated to Saint Mary was built by Colonel Waugh in 1853. Here is an oaken roof, said by the Rev. T. Bennett to be from the council chamber of Richard the Second at Crosby Hall. Lovely stained glass fills the windows, while the two winged angels, holding Bible and Prayer-book, are from the church of Saint Lucchia at Venice, purchased when it was pulled down for the railway. A painting of the Crucifixion is supposed to be by Murillo.

From the end of the sea-wall a yellow sand-cliff rises abruptly from the beach, thickly mantled with dark pines. Promontory after promontory is rounded till the cluster of white dwellings, backed with wind-bent firs, opens. These comfortable houses, called Maryland, after Mrs. Waugh, were built for the workmen in the potteries, which were carried on for many years with varying success at Branksea. The chimneys are now, alas! cold, and the works thrown up. With excellent pipe-clay at the door, easy to work—a portion of the cliff having merely to be dug away—with sea-carriage at the pier where ships of two hundred tons can lie at all times of tide, it is difficult to conceive how failure could possibly have resulted.

Leaving Branksea Roads, the channel to Poole from the Bell Buoy is capitally marked all the way up till you anchor in Poole Roads in company with several light vessels, waiting for clay, and a handsome cutter-yacht or two. Poole Harbour, properly so-called, consists of an inner basin with wharves on each side, where ships of considerable burthen lie alongside, discharging coal, grain, or other cargo, and taking in the blue clay peculiar to this part of the Isle of Purbeck, which, coming in barges from Middlebere in the Wych Channel, and Ridge in the Wareham Channel, forms the great export of Poole. A drawbridge spans the harbour, above where the great majority of ships lie, from whence a wide sheet of shallow water expands into Holes Bay, of very little use commercially. Winter and summer a string of large, flat barges, full of pottery-clay, may be seen in tow of the two tugs "Comet" and "Telegraph," cleverly winding down the intricate reaches of Middlebere, Wych, Ball's Lake, and Wareham, on their way to the schooners and ketches lying alongside the quay at Poole, which convey it to Runcorn, Stockholm, various German ports, and London. All the long working-day the wharves are alive with active, toiling humanity of many nations; the creak and whirr of cranes hoisting in and out, the monotonous voice of the tally-man, are never ceasing till the day is done and a welcome stillness succeeds to toil. Soon the skipper and his men, partially cleaned, seat themselves on deck upon anything handy, and enjoy the pipe of peace, while the skipper's often comely wife, with a plaid shawl over her head, sits in the companion chatting with her man. The townspeople pace up and down; those living hard by, with a clean apron and bare head, but bearing the inevitable baby, look idly into each ship as they saunter by, and think how tired the sailors look as they come slowly up the hatchway after the evening meal.

On the Hamworthy side, the two excursion steamers, "Brodick Castle" and "Lord Elgin," having come rushing into the small harbour at fifteen knots, and nearly swamped all the boats with the huge wave they make, are now at rest from rivalry for the night, moored side by side, and are blowing off steam with a great roar, subsiding into spasmodic sobs. As the light of day fades, heaps of red-brown nets are piled high in the stern-sheets of boats, which go forth, rowed by three or four sturdy fisher-folk, to pass the night in the long reaches, returning with dawn as often as not, having, with the disciples of old, "toiled all night and caught nothing." But each evening sees them set forth again with renewed hope, their glad, vigorous, quick strokes and cheery voices sounding over the quiet mud-

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banks long after they have passed out of sight.

These toilers of the night are a sturdy, brave people, the descendants of those sea-marauders, who, as early as the eighth century, set out from Poole quay fearlessly in their crazy ships, ever prepared for sea-fights or brawls of any description. Poole men were always excellent seamen, plucky in danger, and the most daring smugglers in England. Worth says, that the Danes first invaded England at Weymouth, in Dorsetshire. At Wareham, Canute first landed, having presumably been foiled at Poole in passing, by the intrepidity of the Poole men. But the Danes took for their motto "All things come to those who know how to wait," for they certainly afterwards made Poole their headquarters, as we are told that King Alfred's ships waited in Swanage Bay—let us hope not with an east wind, otherwise, they would have had a lively time of it—just round the corner, hidden behind Standfast Point and Old Harry (who was wifeless in those days, as she then formed part of the cliff) whence they pounced upon the Danish ships, as they came out of Poole Harbour with the tide, and drove one hundred and twenty ashore. Their hard timbers sometimes, even to this day, double up the eel-prodder's fork, and float up to surprise the dwellers hereabouts with their primitive but enduring workmanship.

Eel-catching is a great industry in Poole Harbour. The instant the mud has "shot," the eel-catchers, in their mud-flats drawing about a couple of inches, are on the spot, and getting gingerly out in their mud-pattens, proceed, with three-pronged barbed forks on very long, slender poles, to prod about in the holes, still covered with water. All that are thus brought up are deposited in a bucket; but, as is the case in all fisheries, it is the middlemen who fatten on the toilers. Eels would be caught in these sheltered spots, lonely, secluded, and yet close to the salt water—conditions peculiarly suitable to their habits—in very much greater abundance were it not for the gulls, storks, herons, and divers, who alight upon the mud in battalions, when it is only just covered, and gobble up the eels and fish left stranded unawares by the retreating tide.

In the curious refraction so common here, caused by heat upon the mud-flats, and explained in optics as "the deviation of a ray of light from that right line in which it would have continued, if not prevented by the thickness of the medium through which it passes," the birds look like regiments of choristers with long, white surplices, marching in ranks as they perambulate the mud in search of food. When the two red harbour-lights have long been lit, and the "Brodick Castle" is sending forth her last dying sob, an advancing sound of puffing and fizzing comes from the direction of Wareham, and soon after the "Comet" sweeps round the corner with a long string of clay-laden barges from Ridge in tow, each cleverly steered, and she, too, moors higher up the quay amid a perfect forest of curiously-painted Dutch, German, and Belgian craft, and rests from her labours. Many yachts hail from Poole, and are laid up here. The Wanhill-built racers were a great success in their day; and the numerous and curiously-diverse pleasure-boats moored in the shallows on each side of the entrance, from the fine racing cutter to the "home-made" yawl with wavy lines and square tuck, show that it is a maritime people, hereabouts, who takes its pleasure by sea.

Now, alas! the nice old ship-building yards, that were wont in bygone days to send forth those wooden walls that brought glory to our nation, have passed away. The fine, powerful slips, grass-grown and desolate, are now tenanted by two or three stout coasting craft, with gaunt ribs standing up against the sky, or a smack repairing after an over-hard bumping on Poole Bar. The steel ship-building works on the Clyde have filched all our wooden yacht-building trade from us, never to be recalled. As racing machines for a definite purpose, they are all very well; but once stranded on a hard bottom with anything of a sea on, the dinghey is strongly to be recommended.

Leaving the quays, which remind one of old Dutch towns, many little paved lanes, odorous of fish, lead to the High Street, in one of which an aggressive building—sacred to the Salvationists—threatens the harmless passer-by, in great stone letters, with an eternity of blood and fire. The suburbs — out towards Parkstone — are healthy and breezy, and the high land stretching towards Canford is fringed with rows of wind-bent pines, whose curved, bare, slender stems, and soft, drooping crowns, look like palms in the desert. Owing to the curious action of the tide in the English Channel, there are four high-waters per diem in Poole Harbour, the second, or intermediate one, is called

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the Gulder—it is thus that the tide seems to be generally high. At Branksea there is a rise of six and a half feet at springs, and higher up the estuary it is about four feet.

Poole is one of the oldest towns in the kingdom; but its once fine old monastery is converted by the Goths into Customs warehouses, and even stables. There is an efficient life-boat at Poole, snugly ensconced in a neat red-brick edifice on the shore; but why here, so far off, when ships are in danger outside, and not at North Haven Point, does not appear.

Our stay at Poole is never long—like Natty Bumppo, when he got to the borders of civilisation, we find it "too crowded"—so, picking up letters and papers, and generally replenishing the larder, we sail down to Branksea again, and, turning sharp round the Bell buoy, enter the Wych Channel, just scraping the bar, which, at low water, has only five feet upon it. This part of the channel is well boomed up to the pier off Maryland, where we bring up in about sixteen feet, opposite Broad Looe, for the night, in order conveniently to send for letters in the morning, before going on to Shipstall, where posts are unknown. A glance at the chart will show the immense saving of distance, when crossing from Branksea to Poole, by using the Broad Looe. Here and there you find five or six feet of water in the tortuous passage; but elsewhere there may be only two, rendering it practically useless for anything but row-boats. Wonderful collections of bottomless coal-baskets, old watering-pots, and cans, ornament the principal booms in this passage, and, looming large in the darkness, are good guides at night.

Branksea on this side is very lovely, the black firs clothing all the cliff side with dense verdure, and the bailiff's cottage crowning the steep, nestling among a thicket of rhododendrons, makes a most attractive picture; but the ruined pier—falling piece by piece into the mud—and the iron rail with overturned trucks and grass-grown ways, mar the placid face of nature. Still, as the years go on, and heather, bracken, and bramble again embroider their loveliness over the thrown-up works, it may be that, as Lady Verney so beautifully says in "Stone Edge:" "God Almighty's flowers will just cover all the desolate places that man makes waste, and will bloom on and make all fair again."

Getting under weigh from Maryland soon after the first low water, the deepest water lies close into the pier. The Wych Channel then leaves the island round which it has coasted, and, after a sharp turn, the boom on the right bank being placed rather too far from the real point, a pretty straight course, badly staked, brings us to Shipstall, where, immediately opposite a low green point—on which three cottages belonging to Lord Eldon are picturesquely planted—the Wych Lake takes an elbow-turn sharp round to the left, and when the two chimneys of the inshore cottage are "in one," our mainsail is lowered, the anchor rattles down from the bows, and we swing at good scope to the tide.

There must once have been considerable traffic between this most charming place and the outer world, judging by the remains of an excellent pier, while a depth of thirty-six feet is found a few feet from it. Nothing now, larger than a pleasure-boat, ever lies there. No one seems to remember what constituted the traffic making such a landing necessary, unless in bygone years, before the railway came to Wareham, the produce of the farms on the Arne peninsula was shipped from here. No Poole clay has ever been brought to Shipstall for embarkation.

When coming up the Wych Channel from Branksea, Arne trees—a dark pine-wood crowning the highest land, one hundred and seventy-eight feet high, and the site of an ancient Roman encampment—form a lovely background to the low point of Shipstall; Lord Eldon's handsome grey stone shooting-lodge lurks under the shadow of the dense fir-wood; Arne church perches on its round, smooth, turf knoll; the school and cottages composing this lovely little hamlet, all built of Purbeck stone, that preserves its clean grey tint undimmed and unstained by lichen or time, nestle under the bracken-covered hill; while to right and left stretches out a thick belt of hemlock, and larch, and Scotch fir, creeping each year, with wind-sown seedlings, further into the sandy heath towards Wareham. When thus sailing up into the heart of the land—past furze and heather islands, great stretches of green-covered mud, reed-islets, and sedgy shores, where there is no landing at any price—this smiling little hamlet is a very oasis in the desert.

To represent the lovely repose of Shipstall, when the tide is high, and the

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weather has settled down for many days into absolute calm, would be a splendid subject for a painter. The quiet tide imperceptibly creeps and steals up, without a sound or a ripple against the sandy shore. On early, hot summer mornings, the whole of Wych Lake, for an hour and more, often looks like one vast, unbroken sheet of glass, and reflects in its deep bosom, with marvellous accuracy, the aged grey-brown cottages, warmed and beautified with a deep, sloping, red-tiled roof, delicately embroidered by the passage of years with lichen and stone-crop—brown, orange, red, and grey. The tall, solid, brick chimneys; the open casements; a few scraggy old wind-blown damsons, bent double with the cutting blasts of many a winter night; and the sharp gorse and turf-covered hill behind, with stacks of peat-fuel drying in the summer air; all are doubled so accurately in the quiet lake, that, but for being inverted, one reflection is as clear as the other. A thin vapour of bluish smoke from the nearest chimney shows that a sleeping world is awakening. Morning is the time for artists, the earlier the better, while the shimmering water simmers and palpitates; but one well nigh despairs, before half the picture is secured, of nature remaining in one mood long enough to get all her lovely lights, gleams, and shadows. Then a whispering sigh of wind steals over the placid surface, blotting out with careless, ruffling breath, the sharp reflections, leaving naught behind but a dull, green-grey line, where a gorgeous picture burned but a moment past. Sometimes — happily, for one's half-finished efforts—the little sigh of air, which cruelly ruffles and destroys, dies entirely away, and the limpid water again mirrors the quiet scene. The sweet air of morning steals over the cliff, honey-scented with heather and gorse, even the hum of the bees is heard as they dart into the heather-bells, retiring precipitately if their fellow-workers have been beforehand and the sweets are rifled. The rabbits, sharp against the sky, on the cliff above, look at us with ears erect, but without alarm, and gambol in and out of their holes under the old knotted, grey roots of the furze, and the warm shelter of the great feathery bracken, enjoying the early day before anybody is about. Labour must still go on, however, careless of sorrow or age. Old Chisman standing on the point, apparently seven feet high, shades his fine features with one toil-worn hand, as he casts a searching and wistful eye to windward, as if trying to pierce the future secrets of the winds and waves, just as the old Deerslayer may have done on the mighty prairies towards the setting sun, then steps carefully into his frail mud-flat, drawing about a couple of inches, and lays his waterproof and sou'-wester down at the bottom among the folds of an aged brown sail. He evidently opines that the "gaudy" morning is a weather-breeder, and that his waterproofs will be more serviceable than the sail, when, in the deep evening shadows, he pulls slowly, alone, with his three score years and ten, over the great mud-flats back to his home at Shipstall, where he smokes the pipe of weariness, in the deep, dim, old chimney corner, after steering a hard-mouthed clay-barge from Poole to Middlebere and back several times during the day. His daughter—delicate of aspect, with spotless apron—comes through the white gate, out on to the thick, short, down turf, to liberate and feed her ducks and chickens, surrounded by an attentive audience of the neighbouring babies, each enjoying an enormous hunch of bread and treacle, which is continually in imminent danger from the attacks of the greedy ducks. Their tired father, the fisherman of Shipstall, gaunt and stalwart, in great sea-boots, has come in with morning from a night among the reaches; heavily and wearily he steps out of the flat, giving a fishy hand to each toddler, who comes down and stands, with its nice new boots in the water, to greet "Daddy." "'E ain't got nuthin'," observes our skipper, standing on the forecastle, enjoying his first morning pipe, "the chillen 'll have all they," meaning that the poor man, who has been out of his bed, toiling all night, has caught nothing worth taking to Poole for sale, and that, consequently, we and his own children will consume the scanty fruit of a long night's toil. Fish are very uncertain in the upper reaches—three or four silver bass, a mullet or two, and a few flat-fish being often all that lies at the bottom of the boat, among the green rushes, when the fisherman returns. Yet, sometimes, a fine school of mullet come up with the tide, swimming just underneath the surface, and ruffling the sparkling water with mimic waves. Like a tiny white squall in the tropics, they hurtle past us, with a swishing noise like a heavy shower falling alongside, leaping, jumping, and chasing each other, they pass away into

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the upper waters, when, unwarily entering the wide mouth of a blind creek—that is, a creek leading nowhere—they are netted before morning, and the boat returns heavy laden, on its way to Poole. In late autumn, herrings are tolerably plentiful; but, after all, fishing, hereabouts, is a very precarious employment.

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER IV. NUNC DIMITTIS.

AFTER the storm comes the calm, so they say; and with us it was a long calm.

After Louis Draycott left us, four years glided by unmarked by any turmoil; quiet, in a way contented, busy always. Such happy ripples on the surface of our lives as a visit from John and Stephen, on leave from their ship; the sight of Glennie, with more assegais and various other trophies, and, best of all, the news that he was to be quartered in England for some time to come; were pleasures indeed.

Then, Dumphie being made a partner in the City house, was truly an event, and surprised no one but himself. Of course, he made another attempt to get us to leave Prospect Place and take up our abode in a more fashionable neighbourhood. But I told him I was like a plant that had taken deep root; and I reminded him that I was getting into years, and that old plants ill bear transplanting, as any gardener knows.

Mazie said but little. She was more silent now than she used to be in the old, merry days, before her life was shorn of its sweetest flowers; and for her the music of happy love ceased to play. But I knew—I knew.

I could see what precious and tender associations she had with this little home treasure and that. I knew that no other rooms could be tenanted with such dear ghosts as those in Prospect Place; and I was glad when Dumphie, shaking himself a little after his fashion when crossed, and yet half pleased, too, that we were so tender over the old home, compromised matters by setting up a brougham for Mazie and myself at the livery stables hard by, and taking us such jaunts to many lands, as called for double postage on our African letters, so greatly did those missives bulge and swell with many pages of descriptive writing.

Surely there never was so brave, so true a heart as Mazie's, or one so beautifully full of thought for others, so empty of thought for herself. And after all it is this spirit that makes life worth the living, that gives it all its sweetness and reality, and lifts it above the mere outward circumstances that are but the husk that holds the kernel.

There was a time when our darling needed to be left alone; needed to "dree her weird" in her own way. As one recovering from mortal sickness needs rest, and quiet, and peace, and loving tenderness, that must be always silent, so was it with the sickness of the heart.

"Give me time, Aunt Dacie," she used to say to me; "only give me time, and you will see. I will not whimper long. I am a very sad and sorry creature now; but it will not last. Bear with me, dear, and I shall be, not quite, perhaps, your old bright Mazie, but something near it. Just now, nothing seems to have any healing in it but solitude and silence. I have not got over expecting to hear his footstep on the stairs; his voice calling for me. Fancy plays me strange tricks sometimes; but it will all pass. I shall find plenty to do before long, as he wished that I should."

And she did.

I cannot say, looking back over the four years that have now gone by, that Mazie has been an unhappy woman, or her life an empty one. One treasure that Louis gave her when he went away has been a thing most precious—a volume over whose dear pages she has pored again and again, over which she has wept and smiled—for the pathetic and the humorous mingle in it—the narrative told, day by day, in Louis Draycott's diary. It is the story of his heart, the story of his love, the story of his sorrows, of his work, his hopes and fears.

"It always seems to me, Aunt Dacie, like having part of himself, having that book to go to. I can read between the lines you see. I can read the story of how he grew to love me, of the priceless gift he gave me—his noble, tender heart. I feel as if he was talking to me when I read what his dear hand has traced here—and see! Do you remember how fond he was of golden flowers? Look at these amber heartsease where I have put them—'faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page, to mark great places with due gratitude'—to mark just the lines that ring the sweetest as I read them."

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Thus would Mazie speak to me when she and I sat alone in the gloaming. I hadn't much to say in reply. I never have possessed the gift of eloquence; but she knew what was in my heart—the love and the pity, and the never-failing sympathy.

Though her life was saturated through and through with the spirit of the words that Louis taught her, though "Fiat voluntas tua" came not only from her lips, but from her heart, Mazie, in these days, was greatly changed. Her young, fresh beauty was gone. She looked more like a woman of thirty, than one not far on in the twenties. Her face was sweet and gentle, but some of the light had died out of it. Her voice, "soft and low," as it had ever been, had now a ring of sadness; the silvery laugh that had been the music of our home, did not come so readily. One part of her life was like a musical instrument, flaccid and unstrung; there was no hand near to whose touch it could vibrate.

Mazie had had that half-fearful, that divine glimpse of the passionate possibility of life that must leave its mark upon a woman's heart. She had climbed the heights of Pisgah and gazed upon a fair and promised land, yet never entered upon it. Hence all the melody of her life was attuned to a minor key, through which trembled the thrill of unsatisfied longing.

Yet the minor chord has a sweetness all its own; and so had the music of my darling's life and thoughts. To the casual beholder, her beauty had lost its brightness; no one would turn to look at her as she passed. But when she spoke to you, the soul in her eyes won you and drew you, the smile on her lips seemed a light on your path, the clasp of her hand a true help and stay. Especially were little children drawn to her, and she to them. The touch of their tiny hands seemed to have, for her, some power of comfort and of healing; their artless prattle oftenest brought a smile to the lips that had taken such grave, sad lines since Louis Draycott left us. Were they to her like Elia's dream-children to him? Did they take the guise of the little ones that might have clustered at her knee, and called her "Mother;" but that now might never be?

I could not tell. But I could see that she was at her brightest and happiest when surrounded by them; I could see that her work of love among the children of the poor was very dear to her.

Louis's letters were our great delight, and we really seemed to know as much about his work out there as he did himself. I once saw, in a book he had given to Mazie, the following words underlined: "Sympathy is the soul of life." This then, being so, Louis Draycott's life was not a soulless thing, for, though the sympathy came from very far away—it was true and quick, and never-failing.

Twice in the year Mazie used to go away for a whole long day. She always went alone, and came back looking very tired, and grave, and sad.

The day after this journey of hers she would write a long, long letter to Louis; and I knew she was telling him all about his wife. I was never one to ask many questions, so I did not question Mazie; but, little by little, of her own free will, she would tell me of Rebecca: of the restless spirit that still chafed and girded against captivity; of the unconquerable hatred of bondage, that made that bondage all the harder to bear; of other women who, reconciled to their fate, were patient under it; or, as the Principal of the women's side of the prison said: "Made the best of things, and gave no trouble."

Alas! very different to this was the record of Rebecca Fordyce Draycott.

"She is wearing herself out," said Mazie to me. "You would hardly know her; she is grown so gaunt and thin, and she has a cough which shakes her terribly. Twice, when I have been allowed to visit her, I have learnt that she has been in the wrist-irons, and they say she is ever so much better after I have been to see her. For a time she remembers all the promises she has made to me, but then she forgets and turns stubborn again. I wish I could go to see her oftener. I wish I could get nearer to her when I do go; but the rules are more strict after a prisoner is convicted, and the authorities must be just and fair to all. Her eyes have such a strange look, Aunt Dacie; they are like the eyes of some wild animal that is snared and caught. She will stretch out her hands to me, and moan so, that it breaks one's heart to hear. I must not tell Louis all the worst of it."

This was what Mazie said to me some time after Rebecca had left Millbank prison, and I saw she was very unhappy. Nor yet did she recover herself in between one visit to the prison and another. The thought of that poor caged creature hung over her like a cloud.

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"I feel so helpless," she said to me one night; "they are all very kind down there, but they can do nothing either. I reminded Rebecca that there were only a few months to live through now, and that then I should take her away and take care of her, and help her, and she should go and live somewhere in the country among the green lanes and fields."

"Well?" said I, looking up over my spectacles, "and what did she say to that?"

"Cried out that she could not bear it; that all she wanted was to be free—free—free; and then she threw her arms about wildly, moaning pitifully. Oh, Aunt Dacie, it was terrible! They were obliged to speak harshly to her, and I—I didn't know what I did. At last I told her that if she was so unruly I would not come to see her again, and she cried out, 'Don't say that, don't say that! Anything but that!' and the tears ran and coursed down her cheeks.

I must not forget to say that neither Mazie nor myself had lost sight of our friends at the prison, where Louis's work once lay. Many changes had taken place there. In fact, Bessy was now Mrs. George Bramble, and we had several times partaken of tea in the gate-house, in company with George, his wife, Tottie, and Bobby, and Joseph Stubbs, the whole forming a most united and happy family. When I heard of the marriage I was very glad, for I thought Bessy deserved to have some bright days after all she had suffered, and I also thought that Bobby began to require a stronger hand over him than hers was likely to be. I went down to offer my congratulations in person, and found only George, jangling as usual and crusted over with keys, but radiantly happy, and sprucened up visibly as to his attire.

"I served for Betsy, ma'am," said he, toying with a great key attached to his girdle by a mighty chain, with a sort of elephantine coyness, "same as Jacob served for Rachel. But I didn't get the time to go by so slape as he did, by all accounts; and I thought she wur never a-goin' to mak' up her moind. So at last I says to her, says I: 'It's this way, Betsy, you can tak' me now, at onct, or you can leave me. I've bin' singin' t' same song over and over agen, same as a cheepin' guinea-hen for all t'-world, and I arn't a-goin' to sing it no more, for it fair chokes me.' So at that she ups and says as she knows I'll allers be kind to Bobby. She sort'er give the varmint to me in a gift, did Betsy, hersel' included; and that very night the boy he clomb on my knee, and clipt me round the neck, and, 'George,' says he, 'you're to be my new daddy; Miss Johnstone says so. She said you'd oughter be ashamed to tak' a woman as had rode on a baggage-waggon. Did mammy and me ride on a baggage-waggon, Bramble?' says he. 'That did yo,' says I; 'and many a bonny ride you had, too, I'll go bail, and now you're a-goin' to live along o' me, and you can look at these here picters Sundays and week-days, too, if yo've a moind—yo' and t' little wench. And mind you're good to her, and don't go tyin' her hair i' knots, same as I saw yo' last Saturday was a week.' 'An' Joseph Stubbs 'ull be my cat,' said the crittur, seemin' not to let on he heard what I said about t' lassie's curls, 'and I can beat him when he's bad.' 'Yo'll find two can play at that game, Bobby, if you cut too many of your capers here, my boy,' for I thought I'd best speak a bit sharp, you see, Miss Dacie, 'count o' him bein' so uppish-like, as they say."

It must not be supposed that the ex-chaplain was forgotten at the prison; indeed, his name was still often on the lips of those who then had known and loved him; and I often thought that his successor was not a man to be envied. It must have been trying enough to know you were always being measured by such a standard.

I noticed that, as the time for again visiting Rebecca drew near, Mazie grew restless and anxious. She did not say much, nor did I; but I felt that it would be a relief to her when the day came, and I said so to Dumphie.

"These visits to the prison try her greatly," he answered. "She looked thoroughly over-wrought when she came home last time. But I do not see that one can do anything. She is a noble creature, is our Mazie, and she must dree her weird to the end; what that may be rests with God, and we can only leave her in His loving hands."

Next day Mazie started alone, as she had always done. Once, in the early days after Louis left us, I had offered to go with her. Once Dumphie had done the same; but, quietly and lovingly, she, as it were, put us both aside.

"I would rather go alone," she said, and so we let her have her way.

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But this time evening drew in, the lamps were lighted in the street outside, Kesia brought in the reading-lamp, Dumphie came in from the City, and yet there was no Mazie.

"What shall we do?" we said.

Just then a telegraph boy came sauntering in a leisurely manner—as they always do—up the steps. Dumphie was at the door in a trice, and had torn open the yellow envelope.

"Let Aunt Dacie come to me in the morning. I am staying here all night. Rebecca is dying. You will know I cannot leave her."

We looked wildly into each other's face. Thought ran riot in both our hearts, but our tongues seemed tied. We dare not say what Mazie would have resented had she been there.

We sat through tea almost in silence. Afterwards, I played little bits of Mozart and Handel—things that Dumphie loved—while he sat by the fire, not reading, as I saw, but dreamily watching the glow. Somehow, last of all, I drifted into the air of a German song Mazie had often sung before Louis left us, but never sang more.

When I had played through the melody I let my hands drop a moment on my lap, and a mist of tears came before my eyes.

I have quite given up being surprised at anything I do. I look back upon the years of my former life as to a sort of chrysalis state; for, since then, I have hatched myself an elderly and venturesome butterfly, and thought no more of packing my things and starting off on all manner of journeys than I used to think of going down into the kitchen and ordering dinner. So, next day, I got ready soon after breakfast and set off to join Mazie. She had always liked to go alone before; but now some crisis was at hand, and she felt the need of having Aunt Dacie by her.

My railway journey over, I reached the prison and was shown into a little dreary-looking room, with close-barred windows, and only a form by way of resting-place. The gatekeeper was not at all like George Bramble, and, I fancied, looked at me suspiciously. The place altogether had a cold, bleak look, and I squeezed my hands together tightly as I waited.

Presently a gate, at the other end of the arched way, into which the dreary little room looked, was unlocked, and, ushered in by the gatekeeper, the surgeon of the prison presented himself to me. I must say I was somewhat mollified by his genial, sympathetic manner, and soon found myself walking by his side along a long prison block, upon which many barred and grated windows and stanchioned loopholes had their outlook, if such a very limited view as they must have allowed of can be called an outlook at all.

The surgeon gave me some particulars of poor Rebecca's case as we went along. She was far gone in rapid consumption, in fact, death wasn't far off. The young lady—Miss Birt, was it not?—who had visited her so regularly, had been greatly distressed to find her in such extremity. She had pleaded hard to be allowed to take number 479 outside, to get her into a hospital, and thus permit her to feel she could die free. They sometimes had these cases, and rules were never very rigorously enforced when all hope of recovery was past. All the prison authorities insisted upon was that positive assurance should be given that the dying prisoner should be well tended and cared for. All along this poor woman, number 479, had fretted dreadfully, and shown a deep loathing of her bondage. Miss Birt's notion was therefore perfectly to be accounted for; but, strange to say, the patient had expressed a wish to remain where she was. The young lady had been allowed to stay with her till late at night. The surgeon did not think she had let go her hand once. He really must be allowed to express his admiration of the said young lady in the capacity of sick-nurse. It was a gift, and in his opinion ought to be utilised. He should be glad to know that the young lady in question had some aspirations towards hospital life.

To this I made no answer. My heart was too full. Besides—the atmosphere of the place oppressed me. Door after door was unlocked for us to pass through. Tier upon tier the cells mounted up, all as much alike as beads on a string. Once we caught sight of a number of women in white caps and grey gowns, walking round and round in an open space.

"Daily exercise," said the surgeon, with a wave of the hand. From the end of a long passage closed by an iron-clamped door came the far-off sound of hymn-singing.

"Practising in the chapel," said the surgeon, in the same laconic fashion.

More wardresses; more rattling and jangling of keys; more doors; and then——!

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The remote corner of an infirmary ward, a narrow bed, a death-white face, an outstretched form—some one—Mazie—kneeling by the cot, holding the long, emaciated hand. From high in the wall above, the light from a barred window fell full upon the dark, sunken eyes, the fallen cheeks, the livid lips of the dying woman, and catching the gleam of Mazie's hair as she knelt, turned it to gold.

Death was very near, as we could see—so near that my precious darling did not rise as I came in, only lifted her dear head as I came round, and smiled for a moment.

Rebecca took no notice of me, or of any one. She had only eyes for one face—only for Mazie.

The surgeon made a gesture with his hand, and turned away. His part in the pitiful drama was played. There was nothing more for him to do.

They set a chair for me, these quiet, grave-eyed women standing by, whose duty it was to tend the sick prisoners. But I did not take it; I knelt at the foot of the bed, and covered my face with my hands.

Presently Rebecca spoke, haltingly and feebly, as indeed it was all her laboured breathing permitted of.

"You will tell Louis how I thought of it all—the shame and the sin, and the sorrow I made for him?"

"Yes, yes, dear, I have promised you that. I shall not forget."

How calm was Mazie! How lifted up out and beyond all thought or consciousness of herself. I listened in amaze.

"You know that Louis has forgiven you long since."

"Has forgiven me—long—since!"

Rebecca smiled faintly as she echoed Mazie's words. Then there was silence for a while, broken only by the sound of the laboured breathing that grew rapidly shorter and shorter.

"Do not let go my hand. It is growing dark, so dark. There is light there—you said so."

The sun still shone brightly on the face where the grey hues of death were gathering, and on Mazie's bowed head; but the eyes could not see.

"Yes, yes," said Mazie, sobbing, "you know what he said: 'I am the Light of the world.' Oh, what a beautiful name that is! the Light—the Light of the world."

My darling had the dying head upon her breast as she spoke; her arms upheld the dying form.

"I knew your face was like the—angel in—in the—picture—at home. I cannot see it any more; but I know it is like that still. I know you came—to—set—me—free—free!"

Rebecca put up her hand to touch Mazie's cheek; touched it gently, tenderly, lovingly; and then the hand fell with a dull thud upon the coverlet.

Her bonds were struck off; the prisoner was free.

I have but a few last words to say.

Louis is on his way home. I am glad that the poplar tree is just budding out into lovely pale-green tufts of leaves, and will be looking its best when he reaches us.

As to the Virginian creeper, he will hardly know it. It has gone quite round the dormer window, and is coming down the other side.

Glennie is with us "on leave." Such a bright, bonnie fellow, and as droll and full of fun as ever. He will say that he thinks everything is "quite perzackly."

But he does not say so before Mazie. We are all afraid of Mazie in these days. She is very still and silent, and loves to be by herself.

In her eyes is the look of one who watches the sea for the coming of a ship.

Once only has she spoken to me of what is in her heart.

"Aunt Dacie," she said, "the years have not been all weary; there has been too much to do in them; but no one knows how I have missed him, or how I have longed for him; how much—how much! It was so dear and close; it was such a precious time, and now, when I see him face to face, when I hear his voice and feel his arms about me, oh, dear Aunt Dacie, do you think that I shall die of the joy of it?"

Then she flung herself upon my breast weeping, and I wept too; but our tears were tears of joy.

THE END.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 33.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XXI. "COMING EVENTS."

CLEMENT returned to the sitting-room, which had been practically devoted to his use, and, throwing himself wearily on a sofa, tried to puzzle out the meaning of Brownie's farewell words.

That they were intended to convey a definite meaning, and yet not to convey it too plainly, seemed certain, or why had she so hastily run away?

They were the first words he had ever heard which brought home to him the mere remote possibility of gaining Brownie's love—love other than that of a fond sister. And yet they had been preceded by others which appeared to point clearly enough to an incipient engagement to Anderson.

Maud entered the room, but still he lay there, turning the matter over and over in his mind, while his sister anxiously watched his careworn face.

The longer he speculated, the more convinced he grew that his original opinion was the correct one; but, doubt having entered his mind, he longed to satisfy it at once and for ever.

Another thing he told himself, in his desire to prove the utter hopelessness of his position. Even if she did love him—impossible as it was to suppose such a state of affairs—dare he allow himself to take advantage of her weakness? No; if her love were as strong as his, even then everything depended upon the proof of his innocence. Brownie might be confident about her plot, but Clement knew—none better—how very problematical was its success.

"Clement," said Maud, when the hour for luncheon drew nigh, and still he lay there, restless and anxious, "if you go on as you are going, you will not be fit to leave here by the time Mr. Anderson named."

"Then, Maud, I will go on in some other way, for I certainly mean to cut away the day after to-morrow. Odd that Anderson has not come this morning. I suppose we shall see him this afternoon?"

"He said it was not necessary to see you any more, Clem," was her answer, followed by a long silence, during which she still from time to time cast a glance at his face.

"Maud," he exclaimed suddenly, as if the idea had but just occurred to him, "are you in Brownie's confidence?"

"I don't think she has many secrets from me, Clem."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, tell me this: Is there anything on between her and Anderson?"

He sat up on the sofa and leaned forward, anxiously awaiting her reply.

When Mrs. Northcott had hinted at the probability of Brownie's becoming too fond of Clement, Maud had ridiculed the idea; as indeed she would have ridiculed it now. But it was impossible to make any further mistake, so far as Clement was concerned. To say that Maud was astonished is not sufficient; she was completely startled by the news. Clement in love; and with Brownie! Why, she would not have imagined a serious passion possible for him.

"I think that there is something between Brownie and Mr. Anderson," she answered, speaking almost as quietly as usual.

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"But are you sure? I don't know whether it is that my head has got wrong; but things seem mixed, somehow. Are you absolutely certain, Maud?"

She was as sure as she could be of anything in the world; but one may often have a deep conviction without being able to furnish reasons which will be equally convincing to a third person.

Maud remembered her interview with Brownie on the morning following the Rectory fête, when she had received her cousin's mute confession; she remembered the conversation with Anderson, only the other day, when he had promised that all mystery should be over in a few days, of which some already were gone.

"Poor Clement!" she murmured, going to his side and falling upon her knees, "Brownie told me about it herself, and Mr. Anderson has spoken to me about it as well."

And her eyes were wet, as Clement believed, with sympathy for his bitter pain.

"I did not know it was like this with you," she continued. "It cannot have been so in father's time. When we all thought Henry Grayson would carry her away, you stood by and paid no heed."

How heartily she wished he had not shown such apathy!

Maud seemed to repeat only the words with which Mrs. Butterworth had answered a similar confidence. They brought home to Clement a conviction of his own great blindness and folly, and nothing that Maud could add was potent to afford consolation. Yet, later in the afternoon, when Maud was in her own room, she heard Mrs. Oliver laughing with him, and if Clement's cheerfulness was somewhat forced, it seemed to last all the time his hostess stayed in his presence. Nobody was so well able to revive his drooping spirits as Mrs. Oliver, to whom Maud gave ungrudging credit.

Whether she was looking for the postman, or whether it was merely that the dulness outside was congenial to her own mood; at all events, at about five o'clock Maud went to the front door, when presently she felt an arm thrust in her own and a warm cheek pressed against hers.

"Doesn't it look desolate, Miss Northcott!"

"Oh, please don't call me Miss Northcott," was the reply.

Two months ago Maud would have been angry enough if any one had told her she could ever speak like this to Mrs. Oliver. But on this darkening afternoon, as she stood there in the chill, wintry air, looking out on the dim, bare hedgerows and swampy fields; at the hurrying, slate-coloured clouds; and then perchance taking an inward glance no more cheering; she experienced a need for human sympathy which was entirely new to her.

Brownie, to whom, in ordinary circumstances, she would have turned, seemed distant and preoccupied; whilst Mrs. Oliver, during the whole of Maud's long residence at the Nook, had spared no effort to ingratiate herself.

"Well—Maud, then. Maud—I like to say it—I cannot tell you how sorry I am to lose you. I could never make you understand how happy your presence here has made me."

They stood there, each of them with a great weight at her heart, not heeding the bleakness of the breeze, or the small showers which fell from the water-laden trees, dispensing rain on their own account — supererogatory as the task appeared.

"I hope you will let me come often, very often, to see you," answered Maud, readily responding to the sadness of the other's tone.

"No, no," said Mrs. Oliver, "you will never come to see me; you will never see me again. You will despise me like the rest—you, who are so good and true yourself. But, Maud—I love to call you Maud to-night—try to give me a thought now and then; and, when they blame me——"

"No one shall ever dare to do that in my presence," was Maud's emphatic answer; "and you know how staunch a supporter you will always have in Clement. If not, he would be the most ungrateful man in all the world; and, whatever he is, he is not that."

"I have always been fond of your brother," said Mrs. Oliver; and then there followed a silence, until she continued, with increasing excitement: "Maud—Maud—you little know to what I am being driven!"

Now, during Maud's sojourn at the Nook, Captain Oliver had been very seldom at home. But whenever he had been at home, the presence of a guest had seemed to increase, rather than to diminish, his brutality towards his wife. Maud must have been blind not to have seen that a rupture was imminent, the more especially as she knew that financial difficulties were added to those of temper and dislike.

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But, although she suspected disaster, she had no suspicion as to the form which it was likely to assume. If she had had but the slightest inkling of what was passing in Mrs. Oliver's mind, no earthly power should have induced Maud to leave her side until the danger was over. And this for her companion's sake as well as for her mother's.

"There," exclaimed Mrs. Oliver, in a totally different tone, as they closed the door and returned to the fireside, "we will not have any more miserables. To-morrow will be Sunday. Take me to church with you, Maud, will you? Then, on Monday, I suppose I must let you go."

CHAPTER XXII. AN EXPLANATION.

The recent rains had left the air fresh and crisp; it blew in at the windows of the carriage which bore Clement from the Nook, on Monday the first of November, and fanned the colour back to his cheeks. At first the breeze seemed to add to his weakness, but as he became accustomed to its force, it acted far more efficiently than all Mr. Anderson's tonics put together. It brought fresh life and vigour, seeming almost to intoxicate him. The despair that had recently oppressed his heart, gave way to that spirit of daredevil restlessness which had in former days guided so many of his actions — or, more correctly, had allowed them to run wild without any guidance whatsoever.

Let his love go to the winds! Who cared what became of him? What mattered it how he lived his life? It was of no use to cry for the moon; and Brownie was as far beyond his reach as that orb—and almost as cold to his passion.

Only yesterday he had determined to sacrifice the present to the future; to endure any immediate hardship and self-denial for the sake of a prospective advantage.

To-day, however, it appeared useless to persevere in such a course. A short life and a merry one was the best for him; as it was certainly the easiest of attainment.

Perhaps the devil, who had been sick, was now well again, or at least convalescent; perhaps these thoughts were the mere passing results of the stimulus afforded by the drive against the bracing wind, and by the prospect of freedom after his long imprisonment. Be that as it may, they possessed his mind until he reached Mr. Staite's shop in the High Street, where we must leave him in their dangerous society.

Maud left the Nook shortly after Clement, and warmly did Mrs. Northcott welcome her home again.

"No one will ever know what I have had to endure since you have been away, Maud," she said. "If ever there was a woman born to suffer in silence, I am one. Perhaps, now you have come back, you will be able to make Margaret listen to reason. It is more than I can do. Such a fuss about this party, and only a few people after all!"

"Well, mother, dear, we aren't twenty-one every year, are we? Where is Brownie?"

"Just where she always is," was the answer. "Your uncle only returned from London this morning, and, no sooner is he in the house, than Margaret must go and shut herself up with him in the study."

The door opened, and Brownie dashed into the room, followed by Mr. Litton.

"I didn't expect you so early, Maud," she said, embracing her cousin with a cordiality that was scarcely reciprocated.

"Ah, Maud, welcome home!" cried Mr. Litton, as though the house and all it contained were his own. "Just got back in time to receive you. I mustn't run away again till after the Fifth—eh, Margaret? Maud little guesses how we mean to astonish her, does she?"

"Indeed, she does not," said Brownie, looking volumes at her cousin.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Litton, rubbing his fat hands enjoyably together, "by Jove, it's nothing less than marvellous—marvellous! But I mustn't let the cat out of the bag. Wait until Friday, and you'll see."

Mrs. Northcott remarked that she was perfectly content to wait even longer, and Mr. Litton then took his hat from where he had placed it on the piano.

"You are never going out before luncheon, Walter, dear?" said Mrs. Northcott.

"Well—yes, Mary. The fact is I have a little business with Oliver, you see."

"Captain Oliver is not in Middleton. I have only just left the Nook, Uncle Walter," said Maud. But before her sentence was finished, Mr. Litton had slipped away.

For the first time in her life, Maud felt thoroughly out of sympathy with Brownie. No one knew better than Maud the folly

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of blaming her cousin for Clement's disappointment. Yet she did blame her nevertheless.

"Maud," exclaimed Brownie, when they met at the breakfast-table, before Mrs. Northcott was downstairs the next morning, "wonders never cease. Uncle Walter has stolen a march on us to-day. He has had his breakfast, and gone out already. What does it mean? He came in late enough last night. I am sure it must have been two o'clock. Do you think he could have been at the Nook all that time? It was only a little past midday when he left here."

"If you can't account for his movements, I don't think it is much good for any one else to make the attempt," retorted Maud; and, instead of spending this first morning after her return with Brownie, she set forth upon a solitary walk.

Everything seemed to have received from the rain a fresh lease of life. The frosty tinge in the air was sufficient to exhilarate the spirits, without nipping the features.

Maud's mourning displayed her fair hair and pale complexion to the greatest advantage; her recent exertions on behalf of Clement, the watchful days and wakeful nights, had imparted to her face a delicacy which removed that somewhat too self-reliant air which usually distinguished her. Never had Maud Northcott appeared to greater advantage than on this bright morning of the second of November.

Turning her back upon the town, and heedless of the muddy lanes, she had not gone far towards the country, when she came suddenly face to face with Mr. Anderson, the man whom of all others she most wished to avoid; and who looked about as cheerful as Eugene Aram just before his little walk to Lynn.

It was impossible to avoid him; and the best thing to do was to meet him as she would have met him a month ago.

"Good morning," she said, speaking quickly and thoughtlessly in her embarrassment. "You look as sad as though you had lost a dear friend."

"It is exactly a friend—a very dear friend I have lost," he replied, in so serious a tone that she became alarmed lest, aiming at a jest, she had hit the truth. "Don't be frightened," he continued, reading her face, "I have not lost even a patient in the sense you mean."

He turned to walk by her side.

"Do not let me take you out of your way," she expostulated; "this is not the road to the hospital."

"That is of no consequence. Miss Northcott, I have determined to resign my post at the hospital."

Her face betrayed such deep astonishment that he stopped abruptly.

"What is your reason?" she enquired. "That is—of course, I have no right to ask; but——"

"But I should like to tell you. When I accepted the appointment, I had not the least idea that the endowment had been made out of regard for me, personally. I looked upon it as an act of charity."

"And—and—was it not?" she faltered.

"Yes," he exclaimed, stopping and facing her, so that she could not avoid coming to a standstill also. "Yes, it was an act of charity!" his tone was bitter in the extreme; "but permit me to assure you that you were wrong in the selection of the object for your alms."

A passer-by might easily have taken them for enemies—these two. Anger was in his eyes and voice.

"Our roads in future must lie apart, Miss Northcott."

She bowed a trifle haughtily. "Mr. Anderson, I cannot pretend not to know that you have discovered my secret. I confess it was I who provided the money for the hospital. Now I am going to ask you to accept my bare word, for I have no proof to support it. When I gave that money, I was not actuated by any wish whatever to assist you personally—how ought I to express myself?—to assist you for your own sake, I mean." Maud was sure that if ever she had spoken the truth in her life, she was speaking it now.

He did not attempt to help her by a single word.

"What I did was for the sake of my cousin. I knew, of course, that there existed some—some kind of understanding between you—between you and Brownie."

"Well, Miss Northcott?"

"I knew—forgive my plain speaking—I knew you were not wealthy, Mr. Anderson. I foresaw your difficulties with my mother."

"My difficulties! I beg your pardon—I don't quite follow you—my difficulties with Mrs. Northcott?"

He was bewildered, and he looked so.

"People have such wrong ideas," she continued, nervously; "I knew that Brownie's fortune was small, and I

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thought — I thought — Mr. Anderson, surely you understand—you must see—it was to help my cousin; but now, if you resign the appointment, all my efforts will have been useless, and you——"

"Let me beg you not to trouble yourself about my affairs, Miss Northcott. It is a province I prefer to keep from invasion. But permit me to tell you that you have made a great mistake. If you please, we will place the matter beyond further misunderstanding. I was aware of the strange blindness which prevented you from noticing what has been going on so long under your eyes; but I little dreamed of such a misconception regarding myself. Your cousin Margaret loves Clement as truly as maiden ever loved man yet. Would to Heaven he might prove worthy of her love."

"Clement — Brownie — Brownie — Clement!" she exclaimed, perhaps filling up the gaps to herself.

All that had seemed so real, at once vanished like an evil dream; how blind, how stupid had she been! And Brownie! what must Brownie have thought of her?

"This is the excuse to be made for your blunder," continued Anderson. "Perhaps, unwisely, I have afforded your cousin some little assistance; letters on the subject of her plans for next Friday have passed between us, and so forth—plans doomed to end in only the direst disappointment, I am afraid. However, I am detaining you needlessly; good morning, Miss Northcott."

If Maud's face had changed from one of stone to that of a living, breathing, loving woman, the transformation could hardly have been more complete. Her pale face was aglow; a happy smile rippled about her lips, dimpling her chin; her eyes danced with gladness, and she looked beautiful beyond description. She could have run, have leaped, have danced in her joy; or, but a little more, and she could have buried her face and wept.

As for Anderson, he had stood like a man of stone and spoken like an oracle; it was not the slightest suspicion of the blessed truth which prompted him now, but the sheer effect of her glowing beauty which completely carried him away.

"To think that I could know you, and yet bestow a thought on any other woman living!"

The next moment he could have cursed his weakness; he was turning away without another word.

But happiness seemed so nearly within Maud's reach, that she could not let it escape her without one small effort.

"You will not think of resigning your post at the hospital now, Mr. Anderson?"

Stopping suddenly, he faced her almost angrily, as though she had done something deserving blame.

"Don't you see that I love you too well to accept a favour from you?" he demanded. "Do you not see how it is with me?"

He told himself that not only had she been blind to his love for her; she had actually believed that it was bestowed upon her cousin, and had, deliberately and unasked, set herself to promote his interests with Brownie.

Maud, however, saw that the time for false modesty was past. The situation was critical; a word too many, a word too few, and they might be parted for ever. He had said his say, and the word was with her. This is how she spoke it:

"It is, perhaps, that you do not love me well enough—if it is a favour."

All traces of anger and reproach fled from his face now, as he drew near to her side.

"Maud," he whispered, "do you know the meaning of your words, or are you mocking me?"

She was silent a moment, then:

"I know," she answered; and we will leave them to continue their conversation alone.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

We take a wrong view of the Fathers of American Independence. We think of them as men of Spartan simplicity, men of the type of Dr. Franklin, who acted out the precepts of his own "poor Richard," had lived on "sawdust-pudding," and was ready to do so again, and dressed in a way which scandalised the masters of the ceremonies at English and French State receptions. Not all, not the chief part of the statesmen with whom Lord North quarrelled, were of this type. The glory of the American Revolution, the reason why it was a triumphant success, is that it united people of all social grades—the man who had risen from the ranks, who still looked on himself as a "ranker," and the representative of an old Virginian family like Washington, who, when he asked Morris to get a watch made

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for him in Paris, said: "Not a small, trifling, or finical one, but well executed in workmanship, large, flat, with a plain, handsome key." One of these men of old family was Morris of Morrisania, citizen of Philadelphia, senator, and United States Minister to France from 1791 to 1794 He writes to one of the Penns: "Our families have been connected since the time of Charles the First; and, when my uncle resigned, your father was very sorry, and said he had hoped that as long as there were any of either name, the Penns would be proprietors, the Morrises Governors of Pennsylvania:" an ancestry that, which no nobleman of George the Third's time could affect to despise.

On the father's side, then, Morris was quite able to hold his own in the French society into which he found himself plunged when he went over, in 1789, to look after the tobacco trade in which he and his cousins were largely engaged. He at once became a pet of the salons; was made a member of the Valois Club; was admitted to great ladies' toilettes, where, during the "jeunesse du jour," as dressing-time was called, he made soft speeches, and, for those who knew a little English, wrote love-sick verses. A thorough man-flirt, quite in his element in that strange society so wholly the opposite of Puritan. He was, we may say, to the manner born. His Christian name, Gouverneur, he got from his mother's family; and he showed himself as thoroughly French as any of the Gouverneurs, and at the same time as shrewd and business-like, not to say cold-blooded, as any Morris since Charles the First's time or before it. He had made a name before leaving America. Before he was twenty he had written a set of articles on the evil of paper money, and was practising as a successful lawyer. In 1774 his idea was Home Rule: "Let us manage our own internal taxation, etc., but let us hold on to the connection with Great Britain, on pain of falling under the worst of all possible rules, that of a riotous mob." A year made a great change. England seemed bent on insulting and annoying the Americans in every possible way—chiefly in those petty matters, "sentimental grievances," which are hardest to bear. Tories like Morris—and Madame de Nadailhac was quite right when she called him an "aristocrat outré"—threw in their lot with the Republicans.

"The dignity of a free people was outraged," Morris wrote to his mother, anticipating the high-falutin style; "the worst that can happen to your son is to fall on the last bleak mountain in America; and he who dies there in defence of the injured rights of mankind is happier than his conqueror, more beloved by mankind, more applauded by his own heart."

Of England he spoke as though he were waving the star-spangled banner with one hand, and fondling the American eagle with the other.

"Trust crocodiles, trust the hungry wolf in your flock, or a rattlesnake near your bosom; but trust the King, his Minister, his Commissioners—it is madness."

Perhaps he felt specially bound to "talk tall," because he was suspected of being on the British side; for one cannot help feeling as one reads his diary, recently published by his grand-daughter, that he was a bit of a time-server. His letters to Washington, and to Jefferson—whom he hated—and to Hamilton are full of grand sentiments. His heart bleeds to think that Liberty is so disgraced by the cruelties committed in her name.

"Any human being — above all, an American—must mourn that the first opportunity that ever presented itself for establishing the rights of man throughout the civilised world, is perhaps lost and for ever."

At the same time his diary is full of speculations whether Madame de Flahaut and half-a-dozen other ladies are in love with him or not.

"She's a coquette and very fickle; let her beware lest, while trying to win me, she goes too far herself." With Madame de Nadailhac he is worse: "By a rambling conversation I get more ground than she is aware of. She talks of religion, duty, and conjugal vows. Nous verrons." And again: "We laugh, and chatter, and toy. She complains of my want of respect. I think I must be less respectful to be more agreeable."

Naughty Gouverneur! Never was there a more Hyde-Jekyll-like case of two gentlemen rolled into one—the patriotic philanthropist, eager for the Bird of Freedom to soar in the old world as he has done in the new, and the society man, fond of something more than a flirtation with every pretty woman who encourages him. Fond, too, of good eating and drinking. With what gusto he tells how, at Count de Ségur's, he has been washing down oysters with his

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host's Greek wine, when, by mistake, a bottle of glorious Tokay is opened!

"I say nothing," he remarks, "but keep the fresh bottle to myself, and, if his brother-in-law hadn't helped himself to a glass, I'd have finished it without its being found out."

Yet this man, who keeps up the dignity of the Republic by filling his cellars with the choicest wines—"a tun of Sauterne, ditto of claret, not the sort prepared for English consumption," and so on—accuses poor Tom Paine of being habitually drunk, and by-and-by makes the same charge against President Madison.

Censorious Gouverneur! He has an ill-word for almost everybody. The King is a fool, who is quite content to eat, drink, and sleep through it all. Necker is honest, but vastly overrated. Lafayette is a feather-headed coxcomb, who cares more for a bit of red ribbon than for the welfare of the country. The Queen — shade of Edmund Burke! Morris believes all the stories about her, and, when she is brought from Versailles to the Tuileries, says there is a Nemesis in her being quartered in the very rooms where she used to receive her lovers.

Singularly handsome, the loss of a leg through a carriage accident in New York, only made him the more interesting to the ladies. Once it stood him in good stead with the mob. Carriages had been put down "by order of the supreme people;" but Morris, gallant in both senses of the word, drove about as usual.

A crowd stopped him, crying: "He's an aristocrat."

Thrusting out his wooden stump—he never could get an artificial leg to act properly—he shouted: "Yes, an aristocrat who lost a limb in the people's cause in America."

The crowd cheered, and were nearly taking out the horses and drawing him along in triumph.

On another occasion he showed pluck at a time when heads were freely falling; for he had stayed in Paris after the other Ambassadors had gone. A good many Royalists had taken refuge with him during a house-to-house search. A Commissary came with orders to search his house.

"Have you any 'suspects'?"

"No; and if I had I shouldn't let you look for them. And now, please to tell me who is the scoundrelly informer that has been trying to embroil France with the States by telling lies of their Minister? Name him, that I may bring him to justice."

This bold front saved him and the refugees. After some parley the Commissary went off, and an apology came next day from the Minister.

Mentioning this to his own Government, Morris wisely says: "I don't worry about these things. They stopped me in the street the other day; but I feel that in their state of wild excitement these poor people are not answerable for their doings. They don't mean to insult an Ambassador."

He enlarges on the harm done by Brunswick's "Bombastes Furioso" despatch—as pitiable an instance of the folly of barking when you cannot bite as this world ever saw. If a hair of the Royal Family's heads was hurt, Paris should suffer for it, roared the Duke. He would have better consulted the safety of King, and nobles, and "suspects," by making a silent dash on Paris. But the same lack of genius which Morris noted among the statesmen of the Revolution, marked also the Generals and statesmen of the allied Powers. Brunswick made things infinitely worse for those Royalists who were still in France; and the plots for carrying off the King, which were constantly being started — and found out — made the people naturally suspicious of every one. Morris, they knew, was mixed up in some of these plots; but he was an Ambassador, and it would not do to offend the States; so his plotting with Brémond and others was overlooked, though notice was sent to Washington that a fresh Ambassador would be more acceptable. The death of both King and Queen, Morris believed, was brought about by the "émigrés" and their Royal and Imperial supporters in order to destroy all chance of reconciliation. The idea was that Europe would be horror-stricken; would close in on France—in which a large majority of the people would side with the invaders—and bring in the Count of Artois as King; unless, as Prussia would have preferred, France, like another Poland, should be dismembered.

When things in Paris began to get very unpleasant, Morris retired to a house he had bought at Sainport, twenty miles up the Seine. Here he enjoyed his "bottle of good claret and small mutton," not fretting over-much because his letters were now and then opened, and his letter-carrier

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once seized and kept two days in durance by the Committee of Safety. He wrote many letters, giving his opinion very freely both in cypher and in plain writing. "The present Government is evidently a despotism, both in principle and practice," he tells Washington. "The Queen's execution will silence those Royalists who would not listen to the proposal for dismembering their country." This dismemberment he thought almost certain; and he fancied England would take a hand in it, neglecting "the smaller object" of snapping up the French colonies and appropriating their trade, "which," he patriotically remarks, "will therefore all fall naturally to America." One wishes he didn't praise Washington so much to his face: "Happy America, governed by reason, by law, by the man whom she loves, whom she almost adores. It is the pride of my life to consider that man as my friend. God bless you, my dear sir, and keep and preserve you."

At last his successor comes; he introduces him, and having purchased, to Washington's order, a "surtout" (épergne), and other table ornaments of biscuit for the General's state dinners—"groups, vases, and figures, substantially good and majestically plain, such as may help to fix the taste of our country properly"—he sends by sea his carriages, wines, furniture, and all the nicknacks that he picked up cheap during the Terror, including a lot of the Queen's own "Tokay," bought at a little grocer's for a shilling a bottle, determining himself to see, on his way back, something of how Kings and Serene Highnesses live in Europe. His stay, which was spun out to four years, was in good part "a spree on the Spree," for he had a good time at Berlin, where he picked up—about the King, Prince Ferdinand, and our Duke of York — some of the worst stories ever put on paper, which, if true, show that German pre-revolution "society" was a good many degrees more coarsely immoral than even the French of the old régime. There he met Madame de Nadailhac, and went on leading that poor, impulsive creature a sad dance, marking her sallies with such cynical entries as "the struggle between her reasonings and her wishes gives no small interest." The fact is, Morris was thoroughly selfish, as well as amazingly conceited. He quite thought he was the man to guide the Revolution to a good issue. He kept drawing up "mémoires" for the King, and getting vexed when they were not acted on. In the theatre, once, he was pointed out to the Queen; and, fancying he caught her eye, "I turned on her," he said, "a look full of calmness and sensibility"— he means sensitive sympathy, using the word in its French sense, as Miss Austen does in "Sense and Sensibility."

The pity of it! A really earnest man, eaten up with "the enthusiasm of humanity," might have helped France so much. They wanted him to be Foreign Minister; but, deep as he was in plots, of course he had to say "no." If only he had told the King: "You must send away your 'Royal Allemand' and the rest of your foreign troops, and all the miserable little lords and ladies who will never loyally accept the new order of things, and you must be a constitutional King like your brother in England, else you will come hopelessly to grief," he might even have succeeded in the desperately hard task of saving the Bourbons.

But then he must have given up his flirtations, and his recherché dinners, and his little suppers, and have behaved with the austerity of a Franklin. And he did not think the French were worth the sacrifice. His whole diary shows that he looked on all these Dukes and Duchesses, and Counts and Countesses, as created for his amusement. They were for him a set of puppets, in whose movements he took part; whose feelings he amused himself by "winding up;" but about whose hearts he never troubled himself a bit.

Morris made several visits to London; found the "routs" inexpressibly dull after his free and easy Parisian soirées; flattered himself he had made a deep impression on Lady Sutherland; and heard a very bad character of Pitt from Mr. Church, the rich English Liberal, and from Count Woronzoff, who said "he had long believed him honest, but at last detected him asserting on his honour things absolutely false."

"As great a rascal as his father, but by no means so great a man," said Mr. Church.

He believed, by the way, that Pitt was answerable for the rising in Hayti, and the consequent atrocities. He, it was said, bribed a majority in the Assembly to vote against sending help to the French inhabitants. On any other view it is certainly strange that such help was withheld.

When he got home, Morris gradually gave up politics, and confined himself to "profitable investments" and to railing

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against those in power. He likewise, at fifty-four, married a young wife, finding, to the disgust of his relations, "a fine woman who was willing to accept an old man." He had been a useful, worldly-wise Minister, parrying poor Necker's eager efforts to get the American debt to France paid in cash, and preventing America from entangling herself in supplying corn and flour to starving Paris; but he was not popular in his own country—was accused, for instance, of having, while Minister in Paris, worked with the British Government; a false charge, for he had been even rude to the Duke of Leeds and to Pitt because they delayed sending a Minister to the States.

Of course the diary of such a man in such circumstances is worth reading. It is pleasant, too, to find one who doesn't thrust his theory of the French Revolution before one's eyes at every turn. He is content in his diary—though in his letters he feels constrained sometimes to express sorrow and wonder — to state things briefly. One story I must give in full: "Go to mass after breakfast in the Duchess of Orleans's private chapel at Raincy. In the tribune we have a Bishop, an Abbé, the Duchess, her maids, and some friends. Madame de Chastellux, an Irish lady, is below on her knees among the villagers. Tricks played off by Monsieur de Ségur and the Marquis de Cabières, King's equerry, with a candle, which is put into the pockets of the different gentlemen, the Bishop among them, and lighted while they are otherwise engaged. Immoderate laughter of the spectators. The Duchess preserves as much gravity as she can. The scene must be very edifying to the domestics who are opposite to us, and to the villagers who worship below."

I hinted that, had Morris been a Franklin, he might have done something towards preserving the old order of things from total annihilation. When one reads stories like this, one feels the old order would have taken a deal of reforming to make it worth preserving.

ALTERNATE CONSCIOUSNESS.

CONNECTED with the phenomena of memory,* as exhibited in sleep and in waking life, which we have lately been considering, is that which is known by scientists as alternating consciousness. We propose giving some notes on this curious and perplexing subject, and, in doing so, shall avail ourselves largely of the records and observations of Dr. du Prel in his "Philosophie der Mystik," published at Leipsic a few years ago.

What is meant by alternation of consciousness is, when certain states of mind, connected by the bridge of memory, are very sharply divided from other states, and, when the distinction is repeated. In effect, it seems like two minds operating, not simultaneously, but alternately, in one person.

Du Prel calls it "The falling apart of one Subject into two Persons."

The late Edmund Gurney said: "The undoubted phenomena of what has been called 'double consciousness' are where a double psychical life is found connected with a single organism. In these cases, the two selves—one of which knows nothing of the other—appear as successive; but, if we can regard such segregated existences as united or unified by bonds of reference and association—which, for the partial view of one of them at least, remain permanently out of sight—then I do not see what new or fundamental difficulty is introduced by conceiving them as simultaneous."

Whether "new" or not, the difficulty exists, and we shall not attempt to deal with it here. Our object is illustration, not metaphysical analysis.

A case is given by Haller of a man who at alternate and regular intervals lost and recovered his memory.

Dr. Griesinger records the case of a lady who, in the middle of a conversation, would suddenly break off and begin to talk of other things, returning, after a short time, to the original topic at the very word where she broke off. She had no consciousness of the interval which had passed when she returned to the first stage.

It is related of Hermogenes of Tarsus, that he was a teacher in his fifteenth year, and an author at eighteen, but that at twenty-four he suddenly forgot all his knowledge, so that it was said of him that he was an old man in his childhood, and a child in his old age. A case is given by Van Swieten of a boy of eight, who, in the heat of summer, always forgot all that he had learned, but remembered it again in

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Vol. ii., Third Series: "Somnambulism," page 6, and "Some Phenomena of Memory," page 78.

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the autumn and winter. This is paralleled by a case cited by Tissot, of a boy of premature genius, who completely lost his memory in the heat of summer, but recovered it when the cool weather came. And it is noted by Zimmermann, that the people of Valais send their children to the hills in summer, because they say that in the valley they would lose their memory. These are instances, which we must assume to be authentic, of physical causes operating to produce the psychical change.

Erasmus Darwin, father of the great naturalist, recorded a very remarkable case coming under his own observation. This was a young lady, whom he knew, who had a sort of ecstasy every other day. When in that condition, the same ideas and subjects recurred which had occupied her in the previous ecstasy, but of the events and thoughts of the intervening day she had no knowledge. When in these conditions, she neither saw nor heard anything of what was happening around her; and if any one endeavoured to hold or move her, she complained of restraint, without knowing what was being done. But all the time she would go on talking connectedly with imaginary or absent persons, and reciting poems; and if she was at a loss for a word, she ignored the suggestion of any person near her, however loudly or often it might be repeated, and found it for herself. She was so completely different on the alternate days, that she seemed to her friends like a being with two souls.

Two very curious cases of lapses into the past are cited by Du Prel. One is the case of a girl of twenty observed by a Dutch scientist, Van der Kolk. On recovering from a long illness, she awoke one morning with a sort of Saint Vitus's dance, beating her hands about for half-an-hour. When this passed off she behaved just like a child. The next day the spasms returned; but when they passed off she was a sensible woman once more, with no memory of the previous day. This alternation went on, not day by day, but by periods of fourteen days. Van der Kolk visited her on fourteen successive days when she was in the childish state, and she always recognised him; but on the fifteenth day she was "sensible" again, regarded him as a stranger, and did not remember ever having seen him before. For four years this alternation went on with such regularity, that the very hour of the change could be foretold by her friends. In the childish state she began to learn French, in which she made little progress; but in her "sensible" state she could speak it fluently, having been accomplished both in that language and in German before the attack.

The other case was that of a patient of Dr. Mitchell, and it also lasted for four years. Miss R—— was a young lady of sound health and many accomplishments; was well read, and had an excellent and well-stored memory. One day she fell into a deep sleep which lasted many hours, and on awakening she had completely lost all attainments—her memory was a blank. She began at once to learn to spell, read, and write, and made rapid progress in her new education. But after a few months she fell into another deep sleep, and awoke her old self once more, with no knowledge of the intervening months. Thereafter, for four years she lived a double existence, the change always being introduced by a deep and prolonged sleep. In her normal condition she possessed her former accomplishments; in the new, only that which she had learned while in it. In the old state, she wrote well and fluently; in the new, she wrote badly, and with difficulty. In neither state had she any more consciousness of her double existence than two different persons have of each others' nature. Her family had to comport themselves towards her according to the condition she happened to be in.

A German doctor had a patient who, in a sudden change of consciousness, became, as she thought, a totally different person—a French emigrant beset with misfortunes. She spoke French, and—although a German—only broken German; regarded her parents and friends as merely sympathetic strangers; and recollected nothing of her former self. Her intellect, otherwise, was perfectly active; and when she returned to her normal condition, it was still active in the old relations, but without cognisance of the other phase.

A complex case came under the observation of Court-physician Köhler. This was a girl who dropped fourteen years out of her memory, and who had four separate states of consciousness. Each state had its own memory and its own life, connected only with the similar states preceding and following in alternation.

The historian, Leopold Ranke, told of the Marchesa Solari, the daughter of a Frenchwoman, that in her childhood, in Venice, she spoke French, but afterwards

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forgot it. She had an attack of fever, during which she forgot Italian, and spoke French again fluently. After her recovery, she spoke Italian again, and forgot French; and in her old age the language of her childhood once more returned to her.

An apprentice in a book-shop came under the observation of the German doctor, Schubert. He once fell into a sort of dream-paroxysm, in which he fancied himself a married man, with wife and child to provide for. When he came out of the paroxysm, he was an apprentice once more; but he alternated between the two states, and was now a paterfamilias, now a young apprentice. In neither state had he consciousness of the other, save in such fleeting associations as he took for dream.

A somewhat different case is reported by two physicians, Azam and Dufay. A serious, reserved, and industrious woman often fell into a sleep, on awaking from which she was a different nature altogether—hilarious, coquettish, and imaginative. When in this state, she not only remembered all former phases of it, but also her normal state. Yet, when after an interval, she returned to her normal state, she had no memory of the hilarious condition. The older she grew the more frequent became the recurrences of the abnormal state, and the more rapidly was the change effected.

The same observers had another case of a patient whose memory in one state covered both states; but, in the other, remembered only the things pertaining to it.

Alleged cases of "possession" may, no doubt, be ascribed to this alternating consciousness. As, for instance, the Maid of Orlach, who was "possessed" by a monk, speaking of him or for him as "I," and of herself as "she."

A woman, noted by Boismont, who thought herself possessed, used to chatter incoherently and imitate the cries of animals for hours together; then she would, suddenly and unaccountably, change, and become rational and coherent once more.

Sir Humphry Davy said that, when inhaling nitrous oxide—with which he was experimenting—he gradually lost all perception of external things; but had, on the other hand, acute recollection of earlier scenes and experiments.

Curiously analogous with this experience is that of some persons liable to temporary fits of insanity, who say that when deranged they remember only the events of that state; but, when restored to mental health again, they remember only the experiences of the healthy state.

That there is a connective link between the two sides of the alternate consciousness, appears evident from certain experiments with somnambulists and those put into mesmeric or magnetic sleep.

Thus, the mesmerist Passavant said he had a patient who could, at will, retain or not retain, in waking, the visions of her somnambulic state.

Dr. Steinbeck had one whose memory of the sleeping state remained if she was gradually awakened, although it disappeared if she was suddenly awakened.

Dr. Hufeland had a subject who, in the somnambulic state, would put a knot in her handkerchief to remind her of something which she wished to recall when in the waking state; and, when, on waking, her eye fell on the knot, the intended recollection occurred.

But the more powerfully developed is somnambulism, the more it differs from the waking state, and the more difficult is it to preserve in any one of the states the memory of the other. In general, perhaps, one may presume that memory connects the divided states in some manner, according to the psychological laws by which the past and present are united in the mind of a person in normal life. It may be revived by impressions and association of ideas, or, it may become dormant, and finally dead, by lack of association and exercise. The effect of the association of ideas on consciousness is very remarkable.

Du Prel tells of a patient who, in order to preserve a connective memory between the somnambulic and the waking state, used to tie a ribbon to her neck. In the one state she learned a passage from a book, which in the other state she was able to repeat when the signal ribbon was pulled to recall her memory.

Such things may seem incredible to the non-scientific reader; but they have been abundantly demonstrated by the experiments of many keen scientific men in many countries.

"Every dream in which I ask a question," says Dr. du Prel, "the answer to which surprises me, or wherein I carry on a controversial dialogue, shows a dualism of persons who are, nevertheless, as subsequent waking makes known, formed by one Subject. In these ordinary dreams, however, it is only the matter of our waking consciousness that is dramati-

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cally distributed. But this consciousness, reunited on waking, is again to be regarded as only half the comprehensive consciousness, whenever surprise at the answer received survives the waking, for the information obtained from the answer thus betrays a foreign source, even from the standpoint of the waking life."

A very remarkable case was that of a woman operated on by Dr. Cloquet for cancer. She herself, when in the mesmeric sleep, prescribed the operation which, when awake, she could only look forward to with the utmost terror. When the time came she was again mesmerised; and, while in the somnambulic state, prepared herself for the knife, sat down calmly in a chair, and during the operation went on talking tranquilly without any apparent feeling. Yet, when awake, the very thought of the instrument was even more terrible to her than the disease.

The dualism is moral as well as physical, and many experimenters have recorded cases of patients holding totally different views in religion and morality in their two states. Champignon, a French physicist, reports a case of a girl who wanted to become an actress, but who, when in the somnambulic state, would not hear of such a thing. Asked then if she didn't want to go on the stage, she replied: "No, not I, but She," meaning her other self, whom she otherwise characterised as "a fool."

"Possessed" and insane persons will often speak of themselves in the third person; and even in ordinary diseases patients will often thus speak of their own selves in the past when there is a temporary failure of the continuity of consciousness. Insane people have been known to use such expressions as "the person of myself," when referring to some form of individual experience.

We will not attempt any explanation of such experiences as the following, but merely mention that it is affirmed that in certain exalted states of somnambulism the patients actually see their own bodies apart from themselves. At Frankfort, Schopenhauer heard of a sick man who, being asked one day by the physician how he felt, replied: "Better now, since we have been two in the bed." He died shortly afterwards. Dr. Billinger, of Munich, told Du Prel of a case of his own. He was treating an old man for pneumonia, and one day, in reply to his question, "How are you feeling?" the patient replied: "One of us quite well, the other miserably." He also died in a few days. One patient described to her doctor that she had seen her own body lying before her, and shrank from it. Another, more graphically, as recorded by Champignon, said that, when in a deep sleep, she saw her own body lying apart, cold, motionless, and pale as a corpse, while she appeared to herself as "a mist." She saw, and thought, and understood more clearly than when in the body; but after a short time, the "mist" approached the body, she lost consciousness, and then awoke to her normal state.

Associated with this subject is the effect sometimes produced upon the brain-action by physical force. We have all, probably, known, or heard of, cases of imbecility being produced by a violent blow on the head; but it is not so well-known that a blow may sometimes restore the imbecile to sanity. A French doctor, Le Camus, reports the case of a boy so weak-minded, that all attempts at instruction were thrown away. But, after a fall on his head, he became suddenly clever, and developed a high form of intellect, quickly absorbing everything that he had in vain tried to learn before, and becoming in time a famous scholar. It is said by the same authority that Pope Clement the Fourth owed his wonderful memory to a blow on the head; and he also mentions an insane woman whom he knew, who became thoroughly sane after a wild leap into the street, producing, of course, a violent concussion of the system. There are many cases on record of partial, or recurring insanity, being cured by a fall, or blow on the head.

The theory which Du Prel deduces from all this is, that consciousness is not a product of the material brain, and that, although diseases of the brain often are, they are by no means always, accompanied by diseases of the mind; that is to say, disorders of the consciousness.

But a discussion of such metaphysical questions is by no means suited to our pages, and we must leave the reader to make what he can of the remarkable cases we have cited on the best authority.

A DAY IN JUNE.

THAT day in June, where the river swept,
Where the tall ferns grew, and the mosses crept,
Where the skylark sang in the cloudless blue,
And the butterflies danced for me and you;
And we whispered sweet words to the rhythmic tune
The waterfall sang us, that day in June.

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The pale wild roses climbed and clung
Where the woodbine wreaths from the thicket sprung;
You twined a coronal, dainty and fair,
And placed it upon my clustered hair,
And wooed for a kiss as the crowning boon
Of the lovers' trysting, that day in June.

Now, the snow drifts deep by the blasted oak;
Where the skylarks sang, the ravens croak;
The stream runs sullenly on to the sea,
It rolls in its currents a dead rose-tree;
And the fair, false vows, once set to its tune,
Were sooner forgot than that day in June.

YACHTING IN STILL WATERS.

IN FIVE PARTS. PART III.

On dark and stormy nights, when the weather is too boisterous for fishing, eels are generally on the move. Our friend, the Shipstall fisherman, then gets into his nice home-made punt, and pulls towards the flats when nearly awash. Heavily tramping about from hole to hole in his cumbersome mud-pattens, he strikes regularly and ceaselessly into the soft ooze, apparently without any result; but, occasionally lifting his prodding-iron, he shakes a writhing, slippery eel into his bucket, and goes on as before with admirable patience. For many years he has been after eels, and ought to be in a position to say whether they are viviparous, or egg-producing. His reply on this vexed point was curious:

"Many's the time I be thinking 'bout that. Thousands of eels I've a-skinned, but I never seen any eggs in one, nor yet any young ones; and yet, in a hole, where I've ketched a good-sized one, I've seen the eel-fare (young ones) about as long as a needle, and transparent, so as you can see their backbone plain, commin' wriggling out of the mud, as if they was just born; and I've seen them commin' into the rivers in spring, the tiniest threads, swimming close alongside each other, as thick as hairs on a cow's back."

A New York writer in the "English Mechanic" says, that about a dozen years ago, the Russian naturalist, Syrski, first made it clear that the eel is an egg-producing fish, and found that the number of eggs in a six-pound eel in November, before going down to the sea to spawn, in what is known to fishermen as eel-fat, but which is really eggs, is nine millions, sections of eel-fat having been laboriously counted under the microscope. This would appear to be quite conclusive; but it is strange that so much uncertainty should exist on so simple a subject.

While the eel-prodders are busy, the heron, too, are "helping" in their own way—but only themselves. With ludicrous gravity and precision they stand at a regular and measured distance from each other, and gobble up the eels and flat fish, the latter often sticking crossways in their greedy maws for a length of time, while the stupid bird makes immense endeavours to swallow it. Wild-duck and teal, widgeon and mallard in winter frequent the loneliest reaches of Wych Lake and Arne Bay. They feed almost entirely by night, sallying forth with the owls and bats. The Shipstall fisherman, with a small gunning punt, and a single-barrelled gun—or a larger boat, armed with a great duck gun in the bows—and accompanied by his clever dog, who plunges into the sedge swamps, where neither man nor boat can follow after the fallen game, often brings home five brace by morning; but the weather, as he sadly expresses it, is "seldom bad enough for they," meaning that it is only when the inland lakes are frozen, and there is not a worm or a beetle above the hard ground, or a bunch of duck-weed visible, that they are driven to these salt-water estuaries, which never freeze over, and where they can feast upon the tiny shell-fish till morning.

Round and Long Islands both lie opposite Shipstall, and can only be landed upon towards high water. Their loneliness and isolation remind one of Robinson Crusoe; but even he, with his infinite resources, would have found it difficult to subsist in these islets. Owned by the Squire of Rempstone, they would seem to be valueless, being mere sand-hills, covered with gorse, heather, bracken, and a little fairy-grass. They are, however, let to Mr. Piercy, of Poole, who shoots a few rabbits occasionally. In July, one slope of Long Island is a blaze of purple foxglove, four or five feet high.

Over the wide flats of half-covered mud, intersected by wandering streamlets, meandering aimless hither and thither, the heated air shimmers, trembles, and palpitates as if hovering over subterraneous fires. The refraction, as seen from Shipstall, creates most strange illusions. A heron, standing on one leg, gorged to repletion, appears like a child in a long, white pinafore, slowly waving a pocket-handkerchief. The hulls of ships at anchor in Poole Roads are hoisted twenty feet into the air, where they reel to and fro, supported on nothing. Our skipper,

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sailing and pulling to Poole, in a nine-foot dinghey, is turned upside down in Ball's Lake; the man apparently rowing in the air, with no boat underneath, and, far overhead, the sail hovering about quite independent of him. The church steeples and chimneys of Poole, shining in the trembling air, seem to rise from the water's edge and flicker about. Gulls, which arrive from the sea cliffs in thousands, at the moment the mud shoots, stand, like the herons, at regular distances from each other, all facing the same way; and, when resting from their gastronomic labours — which must be very severe—they look like battalions of warlike Bedouins in white flowing garments and black head gear. The Poole tug, "Telegraph," with a long string of barges in tow, looms quite twenty feet high in the Wareham Channel, with no water line. Then, as she winds through the intricate waters of Ball's Lake, she appears to be sinking, and the barges only just awash. It is most curious to watch the steamer's course—apparently wandering without end or aim through the narrow creeks, now emerging from Ball's Lake into Wych Channel, turning sharp round Shipstall, her barges cleverly giving the point a handsome "admiral's sweep;" now heading for the desolate house on Fitzworth; and, at last, following the eccentric windings of the channel, ranging quietly alongside the quay at Middlebere, many miles inland, till her clay barges are filled, with nothing but a mast and funnel visible from our anchorage, and these growing, to all appearance, out of the heath, as if she had been cast up by a tidal wave.

The tides never come stormily into Wych Lake, beating and surging upon the shingly beach above the mud flats; but the incoming waters seem to slip over the slimy weed-covered expanses, and up the narrow runlets far into the sedge-lined moorland, with little noise or exertion, past miles of stout bush-topped booms, marking the navigable channel.

Landing on the stones at Shipstall, a lovely breadth of short, fine turf serves as a playground for children, ducks, and fowls, and, in bad weather, the mud flats are hauled upon it for shelter or repair.

The three red-brown cottages—stained with patches of stone-crop, house-leek, lichen, and moss on their hoary roofs—are extremely old: their thick, solid walls and open chimney corners affording a happy contrast to the thin, skimped edifices of the present day. One of the inhabitants has passed his lifetime of seventy years in his cottage, and his father did the same before him. One house has its excellent grandfather clock, and some nice old Worcester and Chelsea china carefully treasured in a black oak corner cupboard; and all have the portrait of the local M.P. in a gorgeous frame on the stained old walls.

In the sweet, dry, peaty soil, potatoes grow luxuriantly. Each cottage has a good-sized patch, together with pasturage rights, and turf for winter fuel; while chickens and ducks find many an appetising "lugg" swarming in the sand above high-water mark.

Mounting the rising ground behind the cottages, a clean, white, sandy road, dry as a bone half an hour after heavy rain, leads over an undulating heath, purple with heather, golden with gorse, feathery with bracken, and dotted here and there with a few small but old and wiry Scotch firs, which struggle for a precarious existence with the heath fires which scorch and maim their tender young shoots. The silver birches, which, with brave temerity, have left the shelter of the wood and ventured out into the open, have shared the same fiery fate; but though tardy, their blackened trunks struggle into leaf late in the year, until washed white again by many a warm summer rain. The air on Shipstall Heath is of rare purity, bright, fresh, exhilarating, like a dose of the elixir of life; no other spot so restful and health-giving is known to me. From Shipstall to Arne the path lies through a white gate at the confines of the heath, between the two coverts—one, dark, aged, and sombre, filled with yew and holly, spruce and pine, fringed with oak and silver birch, and lined with flourishing rhododendrons; the other just planted with little seedling trees, hedged by the finest blackberries in the world, luscious, drooping, the size of a damson, and juicy as mulberries. One lingers lovingly beside the shady wood-side and the pleasant hedgerows, sweet-smelling with a haze of blue hyacinth in spring, and prodigal of blackberries and nuts in autumn. A fine turf path cuts through the sloping cornfield, gay with scarlet poppy and golden with charlock, against which an unequal and futile war is waged year by year; but just as surely it creeps onwards, slowly, but with tenacious grasp, to the confines of Shipstall Heath. Among the tall grass, nearly breast high, the scythe has cut lanes of

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short turf; coops are dotted at intervals all down these lanes, in which fussy old hens bring up large families of pheasants and partridges, which flee timidly into the forest of high grass at the slightest sound. It is necessary to breed constantly on new ground, otherwise pip, gapes, blindness, and other infantile diseases seize upon the chicks, which perish in great numbers. Hares and rabbits come out of the wood, and feed upon the young blades of corn in the most barefaced way; and as we pass, a couple of hares, about thirty yards off, are washing their faces and making themselves tidy among the giant clumps of Oreopteris Aspidium, the heath shield fern, whose brittle fronds line the turf-walls and hill-sides of Arne with almost tropical growth. From the depths of the wood a pheasant's abortive crow sounds strident and loud; and in a little damp hollow two cocks of the China variety, with blood-red feet and gills, are having a pitched battle among a perfect forest of strong Osmunda fronds. Everything here is so tame, so "unaccustomed to man," very few strange faces ever passing by, that the birds look upon you in a friendly and confiding manner distressing to behold about the first of October. No other living creatures are encountered during the pleasant walk to the little village of Arne, where supplies in the shape of eggs, hot out of the nest, cream, butter, chickens, and vegetables can be had at the dairy.

Arne is one of the oldest and most picturesque hamlets in the kingdom, the little old Norman church dating from the thirteenth century. It is unrestored and unspoiled, though kept in excellent repair; and its quaint little windows, each one of a different size, pattern and level, are unique. Arne church is held with the Vicarage of Wareham, and is dedicated to Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors and fishermen, for whose service it was originally intended. Among the excellent men who have ministered here, was the lamented Dean Connor, of Windsor, who always remembered with affection the sweet, quiet, homely little church. It is stoutly built of grey Purbeck stone, with great buttresses on the sloping front, and is entered at the side through a fine little porch, tiled with thin slices of Portland stone. The interior is simply white-washed, and raftered with great beams of black chestnut; the old oaken pews seating about seventy persons. A new organ occupies one end, and the sole tablet of grey marble is sacred to the memory of Thomas Hyde, of this parish, and Frances his wife, who died late in the last century.

This family inhabited a large manor house, just below the present shooting-lodge, on the spot where the head-keeper's house and stables now stand, and gave the name to Hyde's Quay in the Wareham Channel, formerly a place of some note.

A Lord Rivers was the next owner, from whom it was purchased by the present Lord of the Manor, who pulled down the old house and built a charming residence a little higher up the hill, framed and backed by the dense fir wood, and commanding a lovely view of Poole Harbour.

The name "Arne" is Saxon for "a retired place," and exactly describes this old-world hamlet, whose nearest town and station, Wareham, is distant seven miles across a lonely, uninhabited heath. The village consists of church, school, shooting-lodge, and a few cottages, but no post-office.

Years ago, a little freehold of three cottages, orchard, and garden at Coombe, was a Naboth's vineyard among the great possessions immediately surrounding it. Damp it was, and is, lying low and undrained; the home of the water-adder, Osmunda fern, and withy; but it was their own freehold, and its last possessor, Mrs. Randall, who had passed her life there, could not be considered as having shortened her days by so doing, when she died at ninety-six, in full possession of her faculties. It was then, at last, swallowed up into the estate. The ruins of Coombe are still visible, grown up and weird of aspect, roofless, and doorless, to the left off the Wareham road

The church, like everything else, belongs to Lord Eldon, who owns and fosters with generous care miles and miles of heath and coverts, at Slape, and Stoborough, Arne, and Shipstall, clay-pit and high down, as far as the eye can reach, not to speak of sleek farms and rich corn-lands high on the slopes above Encombe and the fertile valley towards Swanage.

To have been dairy-maid to "his lordship," is, at Arne, as good as a patent of nobility. Her eggs and butter are, of course, beyond suspicion, and command a ready sale.

Each of the cottages has an excellent garden attached; but, in other parishes, Lord Eldon's liberal allotments are much prized, and, at the Corfe Castle flower-show, no garden produce obtains better prizes than that from Arne.

Climbing the steep, turf-covered hill

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behind the church, with thickets of bracken and giant clumps of heath-shield fern, as tall as yourself, on either side, Arne Wood lies to the left, fringed with bracken and small underwood. In its deep glades the wind may rage and moan overhead, but an eternal silence reigns among the straight, brown stems. A tender half light broods under the long aisles, so profound and melancholy that scarce a green blade has courage to shoot upwards in vain search for a light it never reaches. The paths underfoot are slippery with knotted roots, and yielding, with a brown carpet of fir needles, studded with dry cones. All the young branches that budded in the trees' early youth are dead sticks, and only a thick impenetrable pine roof, impervious to any but the heaviest rain, lifts its crest into the sky.

The Italian poet says: "Spring restores all things save our dead and our youth;" but spring brings no change to the profound gloom of Arne pine wood; no tender young shoots ever again spring from the rough, grey-brown stems. At eventide, the level rays of sunset flame through the tall trees, lighting up, with a crimson relief, the deep columns of black trunks; but even this fierce light only penetrates the outer fringe.

So rapid is the growth of wind-sown seedlings that Arne Wood will probably extend to Stoborough before many years are passed.

The traces of a Roman encampment exist in the middle of the highest crown of Arne trees, but so grown over that nothing definite can be made out. From the little green hill above the church, looking down on the top of the aged grey roof, a perfectly lovely view is obtainable. The blue sea outside the bar; the intricate windings of Wareham and Wych Channels; shining silver reaches of water encircling Branksea Island, set in a frame of brownish-green ooze; all the wide estuaries of Poole Harbour; the shipping; church-steeples; windows flashing in the sunlight; all the tall chimneys of Poole; and the church-bells jangling over the water, each ringing a different peal. Silver threads of water, piercing wood and heath; islets; and sheep-cropped turf right up into the heart of the land. In the foreground lie the bailiff's house and poultry-yard, the children, dressed for church, amusing themselves with throwing sticks at the turkey-cock, which he keenly resents. Immediately beneath, so that a stone could be thrown on the top of his head, the churchwarden, respectable and trusted, toils from his house opposite, up the steep little gravel path to open the church for service, and toll the deep-toned bell when the clergyman heaves in sight. He is closely followed, at even a slower pace, by the time-honoured housekeeper from the lodge, laden with an oaken box, supposed to contain the sacred elements. The people from Shipstall look like coloured flies, leisurely strolling up through a field of blood-red cinq-foin, sweet-smelling and luxuriant, but doomed to death after a single cutting. Under the grey-stone wall, and in the little grass mound surrounding the church, a knot of youths are collected, each ignoring the immediate neighbourhood of the youth of the other sex, whom they will by no means disdain to "see home" later on. The clergyman arrives in carriage or on tricycle from the long, hot journey, we descend the hill, and all troop in together. The sunlight slants through the open door against the wall and floods the oaken pews; sweet, fragrant air steals up the little aisle, fanning heated brows, and bringing with it the fresh, dewy scent of newly-mown bracken.

A pleasant stroll across the heath, after service, leads through a forest of bracken, breast high, to Russell Quay, in the Wareham Channel. Here the beach is steep and shingly close in shore, presenting a great contrast to the wide expanses of mud, which elsewhere prevent all landing. Russell Quay must originally have been a landing-place of some importance, judging from the times of high-water being printed in the sailing directions for Poole. Hidden beneath the gravelly cliff at Russell Quay are two ponds of fresh water communicating with each other, within ten yards of the beach. Though always full of running water, the yellow gravel through which it percolates tints the stream of a clear yellowish-brown; it is, however, wholesome, and soft, and alive with little silver-bellied fish, who leap out of water in glad pursuit of the great blue dragon-flies, and mosquitos, with which the lakes are infested. Here the "Oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool" line and shade the quiet water, testifying to the beautiful reality and truth of Tennyson's word pictures, who leaves nothing in nature to the imagination but writes of things as they are. Within a stone's throw of the shore a large schooner lies at anchor, waiting to take in tiles and

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drain-pipes at Hamworthy on the opposite side. After their long weeks' toil, her sailors run over the bracken and gorse to worship in the little church at Arne, on quiet Sunday afternoons. From here the lovely reaches of Wareham Channel, silvery in the setting sun, with the chimneys and windows of the quaint old town, flaming and glowing in the waning light, remind one of the past glories of this once strong fortress. When Edward the Martyr held his court at Wareham the mound commanding both roadway and river was crowned by a Royal Castle, the foundations of which are now barely visible; and sixteen churches reared their towers to the sky where but one now survives. It was from Pachins Point, the extreme end of Arne Peninsula, and a corruption of Pagans' Point, that a look out was kept for the Danes or Pagans, who used to force the Wareham Channel in their stout little craft—how stout and small for so long and stormy a voyage may still be seen in the Danish galleys found in the Hamble River, and at Brigg in Lincolnshire. It is curious that a favourite lurking-place of the Danes should have been so far from the sea, in the heart of Dorsetshire; and what splendid seamen were those men for whom no carefully-surveyed Admiralty charts and channel-buoys were available!

Far away, the trees on Creech Knoll, black against the evening sky, look like a round table. Arne trees, on a near view, are one mass of deepest black, with a tender green fringe of oak. Over the heath by the waggon-track every little spot not covered with heather is carpeted with fairy-grass. Down towards Gold Point cultivation has brought the virgin heath into good plough-land with large oaks in the hedgerows. Old people still remember a ferry and ferry-house at Gold Point which crossed to a creek leading up to Ham Common and so on to Poole.

Returning from Russell Quay to the yacht at Shipstall, the nearest way follows Arne Bay, skirting the pine-woods of Shipstall. When night draws on, these woods are most lonely and melancholy, and a companion is more than desirable. Arne Bay covers at high-water a vast expanse; but there is no traffic, and, except in one place up at the head at high-water, no landing.

Exploring in a shallow boat, just before nightfall, you discover pools hidden from sight — rush-lined and secluded — where, among the deep solitudes of reeds and bulrushes, flocks of frightened birds clatter away into the alder and birch scrub at the merest hint of your approach, protesting at a little distance, with angry screams, against such unwarrantable intrusion. Little reed-buntings are the last to vanish, with a scuttering rush; and, shyest of all, the wild duck—just arriving for their nightly feed — who, when disturbed, instead of taking to flight, circle round and drop suddenly down as if shot, and with closed wings skim along the water for a few yards, wagging their tails as they arrive at the particular sedge-island desired, and proceed to feed upon the luggs and tiny shell-fish abounding here. Heron and water-ouzel, mallard and bittern, teal, snipe, plover, and moor-hen all have their home in Arne Bay, undisturbed by man; but, while exploring, you run great risk of spending the night upon the mud, unless keeping strictly to the channel.

A persistent spell of bad weather is not particularly cheering anywhere, and more especially when it confines you to the limited accommodation of a fifteen-tonner for a week or so. Our skipper, who rises with the sun, ought to have had time to make up his mind what sort of weather we are in for, before our day begins.

"Well, I hardly knows what to make of it," he cautiously observes, unwilling to hazard a definite opinion; "I thought we should get a bit of a breeze from somewheres, the way it come round. The sun, 'ee looked wicked, last night, when 'ee went down; and this marning, first thing, 'ee looked very delicate."

Delicate evidently meant something objectionable, such as wind and hard rain; for on shore the fierce blasts rave through creaking trees, and howl over the heath, while, on board, the sash-panes stream down, hour after hour, relentlessly. Shipstall looks grey, washed-out, and blurred; Branksea is altogether blotted out—only an inky, ragged splash of darker shade denoting its position. The Shipstall ducks alone enjoy themselves, eagerly digging with their strong yellow bills in the wet sand, and swallowing an appetising lugg with tremendous gusto. The chickens, with tails depressed, and in extremely low spirits, huddle together with pensive, lack-lustre eye, and have no spirit left to quarrel, even with an hereditary foe. The cuckoo in Arne Wood begins his note; but, thinking better of it, leaves off abruptly before it is finished.

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There is, however, work of the deepest moment on hand. Our friend the fisherman caught a fine salmon-peel in Ball's Lake, upon which we propose to dine. The burning question is yet undecided—Dutch sauce or anchovy? The latter carries the day, because the mysteries of Dutch sauce are beyond me.

Another burning question exercises us much, we have never been able to devise a place for a meat-safe—a most necessary article when thus isolated. The mutton therefore hangs to the boom end, over the stern; but rain and sun do not improve its flavour, and flies lay their eggs before you can look round, and hatch out a family of white mites in the interstices of the sea-stock. Bill, the second in command, is also cook; in an unlucky moment of overweening confidence he was discovered showing our entire sea-stock—item, one piece of loin of mutton, item, quarter of a pound of beef suet—to the "head of the family," well-displaying the plague-spot, that would certainly ere morning, in this muggy weather, be the ruin of it.

"Hadn't I best put it in the oven, to save it?" naïvely, but imprudently enquired Bill, perfectly oblivious to my frowns and signs from the cabin below.

Here was a to-do—the nearest butcher six miles off, and the "head of the family" stoutly of opinion that the meat, and Cæsar's wife, should be alike above suspicion. It was with a pang that I ran on deck and saw that evening's dinner slowly sinking to the bottom, wistfully regarded by Bill, who now much regretted his moment of misplaced confidence. However, with Roedel's soups, and an omelet, we are tolerably independent of the butcher.

Then there is an etching of Poole Harbour to be worked at; my literary labours; the newspapers; and the family mending—not to speak of tremendous exertions on the part of the "head of the family" to complete the reading of a week's back "Times," and the never-failing excitement caused by the passing to and fro of the "Comet" and her string of clay barges, at the sound of whose venerable paddle-wheels churning the shallow water I never neglect to pop my head up the hatchway as she sweeps by.

Bad weather means no newspapers or letters, as none are to be got nearer than Poole, where we send a boat every day, at the proper time of tide, through Ball's Lake.

MARGERY.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

CHAPTER I.

"'I SHALL come up on Friday, and I should like to tell Margery myself, so will you please say nothing to her on the subject.' That's all he says about her! Douglas was always the most unsatisfactory letter writer. What will he do with her, I wonder?"

There were three people in the room. Mrs. Downing, a plump, motherly lady of about fifty, with grey hair still soft and plentiful, parted in the middle, and very unfashionably knotted at the back of her head under her little lace cap, was comfortably established in a capacious chair, on the arm of which sat her eldest daughter, Minnie; leaning on the sofa opposite them, with her chin supported on her clasped hands, was Minnie's especial friend, Alice Fordholm, who was very shortly going to marry Minnie's eldest brother, and who was, in consequence, quite one of the family.

About all three there was a certain air of suppressed excitement and elation, produced by the sense that the subject of their conference was an interesting secret; and that the mere fact that such a conference had taken place must be kept, if possible, from "the others."

They were in Mrs. Downing's bedroom—the only room in the house in which any one could hope for a few words with "mother," unattended by any of the nine brothers and sisters—and even here Mrs. Downing cast an anxious glance, now and then, at the door, as if more than half expecting that a hasty knock might be followed by a still more unceremonious entrance.

"Things get all over the house so quickly," she would say sometimes, with half plaintive surprise; not being in the least aware that she herself was entirely unable to keep anything from the rampant curiosity of her family. Perhaps it was because they were such frank, unreserved people, and because a secret was so rare an article among them, that they had such an extremely limited capacity for keeping one.

"She is a dear little thing," said Alice Fordholm, a little irrelevantly. "There is something so honest and unsophisticated

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about her. Of course I've only known her since I came to stay with you last Wednesday; but I've grown so fond of her."

"We are all fond of her now," replied Mrs. Downing. "It is of no use to deny that all of us—all Douglas's relations, I mean—were very vexed about it when he sent her over first. It seemed a terrible tie for such a young man—and we none of us saw much of the child until Minnie went to the same school, and they became such friends, such very great friends. She has been with us for two months now, and I really think hers is the most unselfish nature I ever came across. The children adore her, as you know, and, as to the big boys——"

She broke off with a smile.

"Poor Will!" she said.

"Poor Will!" echoed Alice Fordholm, with a little laugh. Then she continued. "But I don't quite understand how she came to be Mr. Hollis's ward. Why, surely, he can't be more than ten years older than she is. How did it happen? It is not a secret I suppose?"

"No, my dear, no; it is not a secret. I wonder you never heard about it before. It happened in this way. Margery's mother died in India when she was born, poor little girl, and her father, Colonel Venner, was so devoted to the child that he could not be persuaded to send her home, and kept her with him. Fortunately, he was stationed up in the hills until she was older than most children are when they are sent to England."

"It doesn't seem to have hurt her," interposed Alice Fordholm. "She looks the picture of health, and thoroughly English."

"When she was seven years old," went on Mrs. Downing, "her father got into some dreadful trouble. I don't know exactly what it was; but he was cut by all his friends except Douglas Hollis, who had joined the regiment not very long before, and had been extricated by Margery's father from the unpleasant consequences of a boyish escapade. When Colonel Venner fell into his own trouble, Douglas, who is the most grateful of men, could not forget the helping hand held out to him, and stuck to his friend through thick and thin. Finally, the poor man shot himself, and left his little child to the care of his 'only friend—Douglas Hollis.'"

"His only friend," repeated Alice Fordholm. "Why, had he no relations—no one in England to whom he could have sent the poor little thing?"

"No one, apparently," said Mrs. Downing. "Of the mother's family nothing was known, and he himself had not a relation in the world. It was an awkward charge for a youth of twenty; but Douglas behaved admirably. He sent her to England at once to a good school, and there she has been for the last ten years. He wrote to her regularly, and expected her to write to him; and he has been home twice, I believe, on purpose to see after her."

"Has she any money of her own?"

"Oh yes—not much, but enough. There is no difficulty of that sort, fortunately. Six months ago he left the service, as you know, and came home for good; and during her last term at school he used to go and see her every week, and it was arranged that a lady should be engaged as a chaperon and companion for her, and that she should go and keep house for him at a place he proposed to buy in the country. Two months ago, when she and Minnie left school together, he asked me to have her here for a little, while he found a house; and now—he writes me this letter!"

There was a silence. Alice Fordholm made no answer, and Mrs. Downing, having for the moment no more to say, sat meditating. Minnie had been sitting with her head bent down and her eyes fixed on the letter which she had taken from her mother. Now she read it carefully through again, and then unconsciously twisted it in her fingers in her abstraction. Presently she lifted her pretty brown head, and said, suddenly:

"Mother, I'm sure she'll feel it dreadfully."

"How feel it dreadfully, Minnie? What do you mean?" asked Alice Fordholm.

"Why, I mean that Cousin Douglas has been the beginning and end of all things to her, ever since she can remember. Just think, every bit of pleasure and interest in her life outside school came from him for all those years! He was the only person in the world who cared about her. When the other girls talked about their people and their homes, she had only Douglas. When the other girls had letters from their brothers and sisters, and aunts and people—besides their fathers and mothers, of course—she had only that one letter regularly every week from Douglas. She could not remember her father in the least; and she has told me often that, just before Douglas

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when once the idea entered her head, she could not shake off the impression it made on her. Perhaps it was because she was so little used to solitude that the silence seemed to weigh on her spirits and depress her. She grew restless, and wandered from room to room, standing at the various windows and gazing out as if by some chance her guardian might appear sooner than she knew was really possible.

"I wonder what is the matter with me?" she said to herself, at last. "I feel quite creepy, as if something dreadful was going to happen instead of the nicest thing in the world. I must be a baby if I get like this just because I'm left alone for an hour. How Will would laugh! Ah, poor Will!" with a little sigh. "I'll go down to the drawing-room and practise, and see if that will cheer me up. I've actually got the blues."

She certainly was not quite herself, for, although she picked out her brightest little songs, she could not get on; and by-and-by she took out a book of plaintive Irish melodies. They were quite out of her line as a rule; but to-day the foreboding, prophetic wail in them seemed to suit her better, and half an hour later she was singing away with all her heart, and had even forgotten to look at her watch every two minutes to see how soon it would be five minutes to four, when she meant to go to the window to watch for Douglas's cab. The drawing-room was a double room, divided by heavy plush curtains, only one of which was looped back, so that, absorbed as she was, she did not hear the door open at about ten minutes past four, or notice that a man had crossed the room, and was standing by the curtain, listening and watching her.

He was a man of about one or two-and-thirty, not much above middle height, but well-proportioned and soldierly-looking, with a bronzed face, chestnut hair, and bright, grey eyes. His mouth was firm and kind, and the smile with which he looked at the unconscious girl was very pleasant to see. He stood there, quietly, and the plaintive little voice sang on until something seemed to disturb her. She stopped, and suddenly turned her head towards him. Then he advanced, with a "Well, little one!"

"Douglas," she cried, as she sprang up, the colour rushing into her cheeks, "oh, Douglas, dear, I never heard you come in. Have you been there long? Oh, I am so glad to see you." She was her bright, merry self again at once, and, as she made him sit down and poured out questions as to his journey and explanations of her solitude, it was difficult to believe that this was the same Margery who had made such melancholy music a few moments before. The feeling that something dreadful was going to happen had all gone now; something had happened—the most delicious something! Douglas had come. "And now," she said at last, "tell me about the houses. Have you found anything nice, and when will you take me to see it?" She had thrown herself into a large, low chair, and curled herself up as she was fond of doing when she settled down for a chat, "just like a little rough terrier," Will had told her once. He did not answer her at once, and she added: "I suppose you have found something very excellent, as you have taken so long over it?"

He rose and walked to the window, perhaps to hide the colour that had flushed into his brown face, and then, with a rather embarrassed laugh, he said:

"Yes, oh yes, I have found something."

"And is it very jolly?"

"Yes. At least I think—it—is very jolly!"

"Where is it?"

"It——" He stopped abruptly, and crossing the room, with a few, hasty strides, stood over her chair. "Look here, little one," he said, "I've got something to tell you. I wanted to tell you myself, because I want you to understand that it doesn't make the least difference. You are my little one just the same, as long as you want a guardian. I didn't know I should feel such a—such an idiot over it, though."

He paused, and another wave of hot colour swept across his face as Margery pulled herself up and, resting her chin on the back of her chair, looked up wonderingly into his face.

"What can it be?" she said. "Why, Douglas, Douglas, you're blushing, actually blushing. What kind of house can it be?"

"It—it isn't a house, Margery. I haven't seen any houses. I've been at Ventnor all the time."

"You've been at Ventnor all the time! Douglas, what a shame! And what have you been doing there, pray, sir? What is it you have found?"

He walked away from her again, and became deeply interested in a bowl of roses standing on a table a little way off. With his face almost buried in their soft

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fragrance he said, so low that she could hardly catch the words:

"A wife!"

He waited a moment, as if he expected an answer. Indeed, he had thought it more than likely that his first embarrassed confession would be received with a burst of laughter. But Margery neither moved nor spoke. The little figure seemed to stiffen into marble; the muscles of the expressive face were rigid; her colour was gone; and the pretty, brown eyes gazed blankly out into space. He did not look round at her, and, having broken the ice, went on more easily.

"I met her at Ventnor, when I went there two months ago. Her name is Estelle Humpherys, and she is — well, there, it's of no use for me to try and tell you what she is. How she ever got to love me I don't know—she's so clever and so beautiful. But she does love me, Margery, and I—I worship her."

His voice sank as he spoke the last words; and the little hands on the back of the chair tightened their clutch. Still she did not move or speak; but, once started, he was too full of his subject to notice her silence.

"She hasn't any people of her own to speak of," he continued; "only an old aunt, and I've told her about you, Margery, and she's longing to see you. I thought I hadn't a chance, though I loved her from the first moment I saw her; but at last I felt that I must ask her, and one evening out on the cliffs—— Oh, Margery, I am the happiest man alive, and that's another reason why I wanted to tell you myself, because I know you care about me, little one, and what makes me happy will make you happy too. Wish me joy, little one, wish me joy!"

He came towards her with outstretched hands, and slowly, stiffly, as if each movement was made by a distinct effort of will, she rose to her feet. She was very white, even to her lips, and her eyes looked straight before her with a fixed, far away gaze. But her face and voice were steady, though the latter was low and a little weak as she put her hands in his and said:

"I wish you joy, Douglas, from the bottom of my heart."

Her face was in shadow, and he had not noticed her expression; but the touch of her icy cold hands startled him.

"Little one," he said, "how cold you are! Why, do you care so much that I am so happy? That is good of you. Well, now it is out, let us sit down together again and talk comfortably; I've heaps and heaps to tell you. And first of all, Margery, though I know it will be a long time before you begin to think of this as it affects yourself, I want to tell you that it will never make the least difference, never the very least. Do you understand?"

She lifted her eyes, dark with pain, and looked at him for a moment with a wistful little smile.

"Yes," she said, gently. "Yes, Douglas, I understand."

"Then that's all right," he said; "and now I can tell you all about Estelle and all about our plans. Estelle thinks she would like a place somewhere in the country. I hope by next spring we shall be settled there all together. Of course you will be with us, Margery?"

He had drawn her down on to a sofa beside her; she was quite passive under his touch, and had listened quietly, perhaps a little uncomprehendingly, her eyes on the ground, until he spoke the last words. Then she started violently, and lifted her eyes to his face with something in them that was almost horror.

"I!" she said, "I live with you there! Oh no, no, Douglas."

"Why, little one," he said, looking at her with surprise. "What do you mean? Of course you'll live with us. Didn't I tell you it would make no difference? You said you understood. And Estelle is so glad to think of having you. She might be dull, you know, with only me. Of course my little one comes home with us. Why, you have always meant to 'take care' of me when you grew up, and now you will have two of us to take care of. You must help me to take care of my wife."

She put her hand to her head, as he finished speaking, with a gesture half of pain, half of confusion. The horrified expression died out of her eyes, and she dropped them again, saying very slowly:

"Thank you, Douglas."

When Mrs. Downing, Minnie, and Alice Fordholm came in together, an hour later, they were all rather nervous, and entered in a body, with an unexpressed feeling that there was safety in numbers. Douglas Hollis and his ward were still seated on the sofa, and he was still engaged in telling her the history of his last two months, and drawing glowing pictures of the future. She was sitting very quietly, not in one of her usually curled-up attitudes, and her manner, as she drew him

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on when he halted in his talk, was rather grave and subdued; but that, as Mrs. Downing observed to Minnie, when she had gone to bed that evening, was only natural. All the evening she was the same—ready with her word and laugh when called upon; interested in all that was going on; but with something about her which only Will observed, and which, even to him, was masked and incomprehensible. There seemed to be something mechanical in her speech and manner; a look in her eyes as if she were listening to other words than those passing round her.

Bedtime came in course of time; the usual gossip with Minnie and Alice Fordholm was over; they had wished her good-night, and shut her door. She stood for a moment in the middle of the room, where they had left her, and then, lifting both hands to her head, she pushed back the curly hair from her forehead, and looked slowly round the room with a long sigh of relief. She was alone at last! No one would speak to her; she need not think of her words or her looks; she might attend to the thoughts that had been pressing so importunately upon her; she might try to understand. Her hands fell again, and almost unconsciously she walked across the room and sat down on an ottoman at the foot of the bed, leaning her hot forehead against the iron railing. The relief brought by the knowledge that she was alone, that the peaceful night was before her, was so great that for the moment she did not even think; she only sat there and rested in the consciousness that the tension was relaxed. Gradually, however, her attitude changed. The hands were strained together, the head slipped lower and lower, as the question she had been refusing all the evening to listen to beat upon her brain and forced her to answer. What did it mean? What did it mean? Why had she felt as if Douglas had killed her, when he told her that he had found a wife? A wife would make him happier, of course. Why had she never thought of that before, when she wanted him so much to be happy. What was it that had hurt her so?

Suddenly she rose and began to walk up and down the room, her head bent, her hands twisting together. When Douglas had spoken of her sharing their home, she had seemed suddenly to see, for an instant, a vista of absolute torture opening before her. Why had it made her feel like that? Why did she feel now as if —— oh! what was it? What was it? Could it be that she was jealous—jealous? That she cared so little for Douglas that there was anything dearer to her than his happiness?

She stopped as this thought came into her head, and trembled so that she sat down again on a chair which was close to her as she stood.

Douglas had been everything in the world to her. Douglas was "the happiest man in the world." He had told her so, and yet she felt like this! What was it he had said to her? "She loves me, Margery, and I — worship her." He worships her! Oh Douglas, Douglas, Douglas!

Her face quivered all over for a moment; two big tears rolled down the childish face, and then she slipped to the ground with her head buried on the chair, and sobbing as if her heart was broken. The tears, agonised as they were, relieved her, and, as the sobs died away—one now and then, dull and low like a child's, shaking the little slender frame as it lay there prone and exhausted—she began to think again more calmly, her sweet, unselfish nature reasserting itself.

Not live with them! Why not? What was she thinking of? Douglas would be there just the same, and he might want something that she could do for him even though he had—a wife. Besides, he had told her that she must help to take care of his wife too.

Why, here was something at once that she could do for him. Take care of Douglas's wife! That meant that she must love Douglas's wife. Love her? She rose to her feet as if something had stung her, and walking to the fire-place, laid her arms on the mantelpiece, and rested her head on them. Well, why not? She loved Douglas and Douglas would love his wife, so, of course, Margery must love her too.

She stood thus for a long time, her eyes closed, her forehead pressed against her hands. When she lifted her head at last, her eyes were very large and bright, and her mouth was sweet and firm. She walked straight across the room, and kneeling down by her bedside, she bowed her head gently and slowly on her clasped hands. She had come to pray to Heaven to help her to love and take care of Douglas's wife.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by Charles Dickens & Evans, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 34.—Third Series. SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1889. Price Twopence.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XXIII. TOO LATE.

Anderson was for going at once to seek an interview with Mrs. Northcott; but Maud raised an objection. She begged him to wait until Friday was over, adding:

"I look forward to that evening with double anxiety now."

"So do I. With anxiety as to your cousin's power to bear up against the blow which awaits her," answered Anderson.

"Don't you think it possible she may be right, Andrew?" persisted Maud. "I have tried, lately, to hope she may be."

"I say nothing about her theory of the crime, Maud," was his reply; "but of this I feel convinced. She has nothing to hope from mesmerism. Margaret—I suppose I may call her Margaret now, you won't misunderstand me any more, will you?" he asked with a smiling glance at her happy face—"your cousin, hopes to obtain a confession from Litton while he is in a hypnotic trance. That, I am certain, is impossible."

They walked together as far as Mr. Staite's shop, which they reached at half-past one.

"Clement will be half mad with joy," she said as she bade Anderson good-bye. For now it appeared to Maud that there could be no conceivable obstacle to Clement's happiness. Brownie's schemes might be successful or unsuccessful; but she loved Clement, and he returned her love. Brownie believed in his innocence. She had a little money, so had Clement; they might join their fortunes, and, content with the opinion of one another, despise that of everybody else. There was a large world even beyond the limits of Middleton.

"I want to see my brother, Mr. Staite," said Maud, entering the shop to avoid delay at the private door.

"Mr. Clement went away an hour ago," was the answer.

"Mr. Clement went away!" she repeated. "Do you know where he went?"

"He's gone daft, in my opinion," answered Mr. Staite. "He came home yesterday, looking as fresh as paint; you wouldn't have believed he'd been ill. Then, as the day wore on, he grows restless like, and all the blessed night I heard him a-pacing over my head, as couldn't get a wink. He wouldn't take no breakfast, for all Mrs. Hess coaxed him like a mother, as she is of a baker's dozen, miss. His eyes was as black as rifle-butts, and, says he: 'I can't stand this d——d place any longer.' D——d was his word and hasty his manner."

"Yes, yes; but can't you tell me where he went to?" pleaded Maud.

"I'm a-coming to that," continued Staite. "'You don't mean as you're going for good?' says the missus. 'I do,' says he; and he pitches some things into his portmanteau, and sends the boy for a fly, and away he goes."

"Did he go to the station?" enquired Maud, picturing poor Brownie's disappointment.

"I'm a-coming to that," Mr. Staite slowly assured her. "'Station, sir?' says I, as he gets into the fly. 'Yes,' says he; 'but drive to Mrs. Oliver's first—the Nook,' and away he drove."

Maud was powerless. She could not go after him to the Nook; and, indeed, by this time it was probable that Clement had

left Middleton. She remembered the enigmatical words she had heard from Mrs. Oliver; their meaning seemed now only too painfully distinct. Mrs. Oliver had evidently formed a resolution to take some decisive action, and, although Maud entertained a high opinion of her late hostess, it was impossible, at a time like this, to ignore all that scandalous tongues had hinted any time during the past year.

And yet, Maud asked herself, if Clement loved his cousin—and she had heard that he did love her on unimpeachable authority only that morning—how could there be the remotest cause for alarm so far as Mrs. Oliver and he were concerned?

Her knowledge of Clement's character compelled her answer. Her brother had been desperate and hopeless. She, herself, in her ignorance, had added to his despair. She knew how reckless and impulsive he was; and by the time she arrived at home had no doubt whatever that Clement had committed himself past redemption.

"Poor Brownie!" she murmured, as she entered the house, "if we had only walked straight to Mr. Staite's instead of lingering——"

Then sweet thoughts returned to her; and her mind was a strange confusion of misery and happiness.

"Where is Brownie, mother?" she enquired, seeing Mrs. Northcott waiting for the rest to join her at luncheon.

"Don't ask me, Maud. I have quite enough to annoy me without Margaret," was the irritable answer. "There's your uncle—gone away again. Coming in at two o'clock this morning, for all that he knows what a light sleeper I am; then going out before anybody is down. Of course, he went to Mrs. Oliver's. Every one seems mad about Mrs. Oliver."

"I thought you said he had gone to London, mother."

"So he has, Maud; or so he says. I cannot understand your uncle. He came back from Mrs. Oliver's at eleven o'clock, packed his bag, and sent for a fly. 'I'm off to London,' he said; and you might have knocked me down with a feather."

"Do you think he intends to return for Friday, mother?" asked Maud, as she removed her hat.

"How can I tell!" was the reply. "Margaret may know; I don't. I only know this: the boy carried his bag to the fly, and heard him tell the man to drive to the Nook. Mark my words, Maud; that woman is leading my poor brother astray; I am sure of it."

Maud was bewildered; she might have been listening to a repetition of Mr. Staite's tale of Clement's proceedings. Her brother and Mr. Litton must have reached the Nook almost at the same time. Each carried a portmanteau, each had expressed his intention of taking the train to London. Maud could make neither head nor tail of it.

"Poor Brownie!" had been the burden of her cousin's lament; but surely never did a girl appear to need pity less.

"Uncle Walter is off again, Maud. I expect he has a season ticket, and is afraid of not getting fair value for his money."

"I will not allow such goings on from my house!" declared Mrs. Northcott, whose excitement had reached boiling point, and continually bubbled over with exclamations of this kind.

"He won't trouble it much longer," whispered Brownie, for the sole benefit of Maud.

"You think uncle will return before Friday?" enquired Maud, whose new happiness would not allow her to look entirely dismal.

Brownie laughed her reply:

> "Doubt that the stars are fire,
> Doubt that the sun doth move,
> Doubt truth to be a liar,
> But never doubt—

that Uncle Walter will be here on the Fifth, Maudie."

After luncheon, Maud led Brownie to her own room. All the morning's coldness and lack of cordiality had disappeared; she could no longer accuse Brownie of coldness to Clement; whilst for her cousin's part, ten minutes was the utmost extent of her vexation.

"Brownie," began Maud, after fidgeting about the room for some time, "I have a piece of news that will surprise you——"

"My darling," was the astonishing answer, "I know all about it. I wondered whether you were going to tell me. What a trial it was to hold my tongue during luncheon! I am so glad, Maudie! I do congratulate him, and you too."

"However did you know, Brownie? Nobody had any idea—not a soul."

Brownie's answer was a peal of happy laughter.

"The cheque, Maud! Besides, everybody in Middleton knows it by this time—since you walked along the High Street together. I saw you, although you were

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both too deeply engrossed to notice poor me. I shall have to call him Andrew now; how odd! Clement guessed it, too, Maudie; he told me so. Do you know, I really do intend that he shall be actually here—in this very house, before my birthday is over."

"You do make so sure about it all," exclaimed Maud, placing her arm about her cousin's waist.

"Of course I do. I have not one single doubt now. I am anxious for it to be over, so anxious; but I know I shall succeed. Oh, I know I must! You will see. I have arranged every single detail—every one. And when I—when it is all over—open sesame! and in will walk Clement. I can see him now; can't you, Maud? I can see him coming into the room, looking so careless and proud—just as he used to look. You will see them all then! How they will press round, each struggling to be the first to take his hand. Ah, they will be sorry then—yes, they will—sorry they have so bitterly wronged him. They won't be able to say enough. And you know Clement's way—dear old Clement: 'Oh, never mind, my dear fellow;'—I can hear him say it—'it's nothing,' he will say—'nothing at all.' And then he will toss back his hair, just as he does, you know, and go on talking about something else, just as if nothing had happened since he was here last. I can picture it all. And, Maudie—you shall help me, and Mr. Anderson, too—— Maud! Maud! what is the matter?"

Maud was staring at her aghast, yet not daring to interrupt.

Brownie was intoxicated with her hopes, carried away by her enthusiasm; it seemed so hard a blow to deal—a blow which must make Brownie bite the dust, which must brush away her brightness for ever, dim the light of her eyes, and crush the faith that was in her.

"Brownie, Brownie, he has gone!" she cried, at last, looking pleadingly into her cousin's face, as though to implore her to be calm. "He has gone, Brownie."

"Yes, I know," was the answer. "But he will come back; there is no fear. I will tell you a secret, Maudie: I have bribed him."

"You will not understand," said Maud, reduced almost to desperation. "Clement, Brownie—it is Clement who has gone."

Brownie's only answer was a confident toss of the head.

"But, darling, I was at Mr. Staite's before luncheon. Clement went away this morning. He has gone for—for ever."

Sinking helplessly into a chair, Brownie stared blankly before her. It was difficult to realise the full meaning of Maud's words.

"Clement gone!" she exclaimed.

"It is true, dear. And, Brownie, it was I who helped to drive him away. I was so blind," she continued, dropping on her knees by her cousin's side, and looking pityingly into the pale face. "I did not know then. You were so much together—you and Andrew, I mean. I knew that he wrote to you, and when you told me about Clement, I thought you meant him—Andrew. So did Clement, darling. It has been a miserable mistake all along. Clement thought so too."

"Thought what, Maud?" Brownie moaned. "Don't torture me. Tell me, quickly, for pity's sake. What did Clement think?"

"That you—that you—that it was Mr. Anderson—Andrew——"

"The idea!" exclaimed Brownie. "How could any one be so absurd!"

The absurdity was not quite so evident to Maud, however, as it appeared to her cousin.

"I had no thought of it until Clement spoke to me a few days ago," continued Maud. "He asked me whether you liked—liked Andrew; and I thought you did, and I told him so."

Until now Brownie's eyes had been hot, and dry, and staring; but at last the tears came to them "like the gentle dew from heaven." Bowing her head almost to her knees, she covered her face with her hands. For, although Clement's words of late had led her to make sure of his love, it was sweet to hear that he had actually confessed it to Maud. And, if he did really and truly love her, what did it matter though all else should fail?

"I know what to do, Maud," she said, while her cousin was endeavouring to gather resolution for the last and worst blow of all, "he will write to say where he is. There will be time to bring him back before Friday yet. I will go myself to persuade him to return."

"But, Brownie," was Maud's quiet answer, "he has not gone away alone. He did not go straight from Mr. Staite's to the station. He called at Mrs. Oliver's. Oh, I am afraid—— I do not like to say it, darling; but I am afraid they have gone together."

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Brownie drew her tearful face from where Maud had held it to her breast, and looked doubtingly into her eyes. Yes, before this morning, she had been jealous of Mrs. Oliver. She could not put aside Maud's suggestion as ridiculous.

"But," she pleaded, presently, "don't be ashamed of me, Maud; but, if he—and you did say so—if he really does—he would not—he could not go away with Mrs. Oliver, could he?"

Maud knew her brother's headstrong nature, and his recent desperate state of mind too well to give a satisfactory answer; whilst Brownie remembered how constantly he had been at the Nook, and how much he owed to Mrs. Oliver.

Suddenly drying her eyes, she started to her feet.

"I will go to Mrs. Oliver's at once, Maud. That will decide everything. If she is still at home, there is an end to these horrible suspicions at once; if not, and we find that Clement——then," she added with an irrepressible sob, "then there may as well be an end to everything."

CHAPTER XXIV. WAITING.

Powerless to hinder Brownie from carrying out her intention of visiting the Nook, Maud determined to accompany her, and upon reaching Mrs. Oliver's door, it was she who entered the house to ascertain the best news or the worst; whilst Brownie paced up and down, up and down, staring at its stone walls, as if to learn her fate from its unexpressive face.

She remembered how she had driven over the same ground a month or more ago, doubtful whether she should find Clement dead or alive at her journey's end.

It had been a question of life or death then; but now, she told herself, it was a question of heaven or hell.

At last Maud came slowly along the path, stopping to fasten the gate behind her—doing everything possible to postpone the time for speaking.

"They have gone, Maud?" asked Brownie, interpreting her cousin's unwillingness.

"Yes, Mrs. Oliver has gone, darling."

"And — and Clement with her, Maud?"

"Let us get home," was the answer, as Maud half pushed Brownie into the carriage.

"And Clement with her, Maud?" she repeated.

"My poor girl; what can I say to you? What can I do for you?"

"Don't speak to me yet—presently," was the answer; and she sat staring blankly before her; dead to all hope since she had lost Clement.

By-and-by she turned her agonised face to Maud:

"Tell me just the truth, Maudie. Don't try to make it better than it is. Tell me everything."

"It is not possible to make it better, dear—nor worse. Fanny told me a great deal more than I can understand; but there is no doubt about one thing—Clement arrived this morning just after Uncle Walter left. He and Mrs. Oliver were alone for about half-an-hour; then they went away together in Clement's fly. Fanny heard him tell the coachman to hurry so as to catch the up express. That is all that was known; there is not another trace of them; no clue whatever to their destination."

"But—but about Uncle Walter?" asked Brownie, eager to be mistress of the whole situation.

"He returned after Mrs. Oliver had gone away with Clement. He had been at the Nook quite early this morning, he stayed a long time, and then went away. Upon his arrival this second time Fanny says he was like a madman—perfectly furious. It has been an unhappy household, Brownie! It seems there was a regular fracas last night. According to Fanny the place was like a bear-garden; and Captain Oliver actually left the house some time before Mr. Litton, vowing all kinds of awful things."

"But, Maud," said Brownie, "I do not understand. Why was uncle so put out upon his arrival there the second time, and why was he there at all?"

"I do not understand any more than you do, Brownie," Maud answered; "only this—that she has gone, and Clement with her. Poor Mrs. Oliver and poor Clement!"

And Maud remembered her conversation with Mrs. Oliver on the previous Saturday; how that she had almost begged to be judged leniently for some act at that time uncommitted.

"Maud," exclaimed her cousin, "I know it is wicked; but I hate her. I do—I hate her."

And not another word was exchanged until they reached home.

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"So all your plans are upset," said Maud, when they were safely in her room. "Brownie, I am afraid, in any case, they would have ended only in failure. Can't we make some excuse to put these people off?"

"Put them off?" cried Brownie excitedly, "do you think that I shall cease my efforts because of this! Clement has gone. Yes; but his good name is more important than ever. And, Maudie, I have still one hope. No," she added quickly, reading Maud's disapproval in her face, "I do not mean that. Not that sort of hope. Between him and me there never can be anything now; never anything. But he will send his address. I am sure he will. He told me so when he thought of going away before. Oh, he may, Maud; and, if he does, I will go to him."

"You could not, Brownie; not while——"

"But I could. If only he writes, I will. Nothing in all the world shall hinder me. Do you not see how much he has at stake? As for me, I am nothing. I wish I were dead. He must have money; and to obtain money he must become Henry's partner. I will beg and implore him to come back, if only for a few hours. Oh, he must write; there are two whole days yet before Friday evening. Then—then," she added, with an hysterical laugh, "they will all be wishing me many happy returns of the day!"

The postman did not come to Eastwood that evening, and, pleading a headache, truly enough, Brownie went early to bed.

What a night it was! She lay awake, thinking of nothing but the possibility of receiving a letter the next morning; only to know disappointment when the morning came. All day she waited indoors, watching for hours for the first sight of the postman; so that Mrs. Northcott suggested that she was expecting birthday-cards before they were due.

As dinner time drew near, she began to look thoroughly ill, and the sight of her own face in the glass added another to her anxieties. Suppose she should be unable to bear up until the day after to-morrow!

"You will have no roses for Friday, Margaret," said Mrs. Northcott; "no one would believe you were looking forward to your birthday."

"I am not looking forward, auntie," she answered, with difficulty keeping back her tears.

The gong sounded for dinner; Mr. Litton not having put in an appearance since his journey to Mrs. Oliver's, the three were alone.

They took their places at the table at half-past seven; the last post was due at eight.

Brownie was constantly on the alert; and Maud, watching her, could imagine the fearful anxiety that oppressed her. Suddenly, rat-tat-tat! Most welcome of sounds.

Before its echo died away, Brownie had left the room, to return the next minute waving an envelope frantically above her head.

"From Clement! from Clement!" she exclaimed; and placing it in her cousin's hand, sat down, and burst into tears.

Mrs. Northcott was both angry and curious, begging for enlightenment, while she protested against this disturbance of her meal.

Maud at last read the letter. Merely a few lines dated from Number Twelve, Rochester Street, Strand.

But the address was the moral of the letter.

"I must start at once," cried Brownie, "I can just catch the 9.30."

"Margaret," said Mrs. Northcott, "I demand an explanation of your extraordinary behaviour."

To have satisfied her, however, would have defeated all Brownie's schemes. Let Mrs. Northcott once suspect that any evil was intended against her brother, and there would be an end to the matter at once.

Maud came to the rescue; taking Brownie apart in the first place, and persuading her that it was not fit she should arrive in London late at night; she promised that there should be nothing to hinder her from travelling by an early train in the morning.

Having thus disposed of her cousin, Maud turned to Mrs. Northcott, telling her that Clement had, some time ago, threatened to enlist; that Brownie was anxious he should remain free until the six months, appointed by his father wherein to prove his innocence, had expired.

Maud was endowed with an admirable patience, and she needed it all this evening. It was half-past eleven o'clock before she bade her mother good night, and found her way to Brownie's room to inform her of the success which had attended her efforts.

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But, tired out and worn with watching, Brownie was already asleep. Looking round the room, Maud saw that every arrangement had been made for the morrow. Her ulster, hat, and gloves were all put ready to her hand, and on the dressing-table stood a clock with an alarum—borrowed from one of the servants—and set at half-past six. Brownie had fallen asleep longing for the night to pass; she awoke to find her wish fulfilled. It was the morning of the fourth of November.

PAINFUL PLEASURES.

THE other day I took train from Naples to Pompeii. It was a fair, sunny morning, and the sea was like steel, mottled with curved lines where the air breathed upon it. A more gladsome sight than the promontories which bind this most gorgeous of bays, all clear to view in the early light; than the various shapes of white sails upon the water; and the distant cliffs of Capri against the horizon; a more gladsome sight, I say, could not have been offered to human beings by dear Dame Nature in her best mood.

There were three people in the compartment with me. Two were Italians, to whom, of course, the seascape and the exhilarating air were familiar. They read their morning newspapers in excusable neglect of things external.

The third of my companions was of a different species. I did not at first know what to make of him. That he was Anglo-Saxon I hardly doubted. But the "genus" is now so unconscionably comprehensive that I had a wide field for conjecture under this one heading. Was he British? Was he American? Australian? South African? And, if British, was he English, Irish, or Scotch?

To tell the truth, I did not feel irresistibly drawn towards him. One cannot help one's feelings. Sympathy and antipathy are impulses which will not be coerced. They are as wayward, and nearly as strong, as love itself. I can hardly, therefore, blame myself that I looked with but little affection at this long, lean man, in a white planter's hat; whose bronzed face and inflamed eyes, whose jaded expression, and whose feverish glances, first at one window of the carriage and then at the other, with his subsequent rapid usage of pencil and paper, all proclaimed him to my intelligence as a globe-trotter of the most compassionable kind.

My Italian companions, now and then, peered up at our friend. His energy of body and mind astonished them. But they contented themselves, I suppose, with the explanation that is at all times to hand for elucidation of the like mysteries of conduct. They assumed that he was English, and, since he was English, he was a chartered eccentric.

By-and-by the stranger paused in his hot chase and record of impressions. He looked at us, his associates, as if he had not hitherto heeded us. The Italians he dismissed from notice immediately. Upon me, however, his gaze paused; and then, curtly, he said: "Going to Pompeii?"

Of course, this was monstrous. We had not been introduced, you know. And he did not for a moment tarry to reflect whether it might be less pleasing to me to be interrogated than to him to interrogate. But it solved the riddle for me. I knew he was not a Briton. He was a Colonist, or an American.

His whole sad story soon flowed forth. He was an Australian, who was under contract to go round the world in about four months, visiting, in the time, the majority of the large cities and famous natural wonders of the earth. He had already been out three months; his contract was broken. In spite of the most heroic efforts he had hitherto failed to see Europe north of Naples. Rome, Venice, Florence, the Riviera, Switzerland, Germany, Paris, and England were still before him. He sighed and sucked his pencil, as he plaintively told me, what was sufficiently apparent, that he was "a bit worn and out of condition with all this bustling about."

He had just arrived in Naples from Palestine. The sun of Jerusalem had inflamed his eyes. He did not think the Holy Land half so interesting as his Bible depicted it. But the hotel in Jerusalem excited his admiration. He told me what he had eaten in it, and the amount of his bill—justifying his enthusiasm, as it seemed to me.

He also kindly warned me against a certain purveyor of donkeys at Jaffa, who, I judge, had hired out to him an animal with more vices and fewer virtues than the average ass may be supposed to possess.

But what most grieved his soul at the moment was the recollection of the misery of the journey he had made only the previous day—from Brindisi to Naples.

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"You bet, sir," he moaned, "I've had some bad times in my life; but that travel was one of the worst. I ate a bun at one darned little station, and was going right on to something else, when the engine began to move. Just because I was a stranger, they never told me when the train would go. But I took to my heels, and jumped in; and that bun will be paid for by some one else. After that, I never stirred from the cars; for, you see, if I was once to lose my furniture, I'd never get it again, because I don't talk anything but English. There was not a soul I spoke to on that line who could understand me."

He said this last in the tone of a man declaring that he had lately experienced an earthquake; that the earthquake had occasioned the death of all his relations; and that he alone of his clan survived to be the narrator of the awful event.

Chance parted us at the Pompeii Station. The Australian had had his presentiments about the sufferings to be undergone, even in a dead city like Pompeii; and I had made bold to try and console him with the offer of my companionship. He had jumped at the offer like a hungry trout at a fly. With an intermediary between himself and the guide—whom the authorities give to the stranger in exchange for the two francs which he pays to enter the city—my friend declared that he could almost look forward to a happy day. But it was not to be. As I have said, we were separated. Instead of taking breakfast with me before going through the trial of being "personally conducted," my luckless friend was snapped up straightway by a guide. The last I saw of him were his uplifted hands, as he tried in vain to decline the guide's companionship. And so, for the ensuing hour and a half, I have no doubt he was saddled with the guide as fast as ever a victim was held by his incubus. The guide would talk Italian or French; and my poor friend would say "Yes, yes," and long for the moment when he had done with Pompeii.

There are certain so-called pleasures which may, without a suspicion of exaggeration, be said to be more insufferable than the average pain, which declares itself honestly. The man who embraces one or other of these pleasures is doubly wronged. He is duped by the disguise which ensnares him. And he is wronged by the suffering he is called upon to bear, where he reasonably hoped to revel in enjoyment.

Again, there are certain pleasures—and their number is legion—which, with misuse, speedily transform themselves into tortures. The more conspicuous of these are well known to us. Moralists from all time have prattled of them; or built upon them portly volumes, for their own fame, and the world's warning. Solomon, and lesser men, have tested them, and been disillusioned.

Travel is one of these pleasures. It may in the long run be compared to the sugar which—if tradition is to be believed—the shrewd confectioner offers "ad libitum" to his apprentice when the fond youth enters his shop, seduced by the love of comfits. The boy makes himself ill without loss of time; the confectioner smiles and rubs his hands; and henceforth the lambs and lions of sugar, the sweet cakes, and the toffee of the establishment are as secure as if they were under the watch and ward of an octogenarian, the victim of chronic dyspepsia.

Our Australian friend had ridden his horse too hard. Not a little pain was the consequence. He had suffocated his intelligence with the plethora of facts and sights which he had pressed upon it, demanding at the same time that it should digest them all on the instant. That he had wearied his body was also sufficiently apparent. I dare say if the physical part of him could have been put to the question, and compelled to answer truthfully, it would have replied, that of all the toils it had been called upon to endure since it became a sensitive entity, this toil of pleasure was the most detestable.

In the beginning, travel is delightful; even as the first ten or twelve mouthfuls of toffee are, to the eager apprentice, a celestial indulgence. But by-and-by much system is necessary to preserve the aroma of pleasure that accompanies the earlier experience. The novelty of movement and the beauty of the world are less attractive when a month has passed. The imagination annoys its master with pictures of the felicity of home-rest such as it would have ridiculed six weeks previously. There is but a moderate amount of truth in such representations. This, however, is of course nothing to the imagination, which prefers the false to the true. And, likewise, the traveller unaccountably finds himself getting prone to scoff at the sweet spots on the world's surface, which were his original object of pursuit, and which universal testimony applauds for the witchery of their charm. He presumes to

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think that his native village of Dullborough-cum-Slow is more enchanting than Naples, and more lively than Vienna.

But there are worse pains, or pleasures in decadence, than excessive travel. I suppose one of the most obvious of these is the passion of love. Here, however, all of us do not suffer alike. If the poets may be believed, they are the chief victims. It is a theme they never tire of discussing. When first they set eyes on the fair one, all was ecstasy. The world was suddenly made radiant. The sun itself was dwarfed by the light that beamed from her eyes, and from the responsive light in the eyes of the man she has ensnared. Everything is metamorphosed; because the man himself has suddenly undergone a metamorphosis. Duly comes the reaction. It does not matter in what guise or stage of the passion, it comes. That it comes eventually is sufficient.

This is the moment when the poet finds the world appallingly blank and obscure. He is conscious of but one thing: that he suffers where he expected to find perennial pleasure. Had he loved with less energy, he would have suffered less.

Of course it is absurd to talk reason to lovers. Nature must be changed ere they will be affected by it.

For this draught of bitter sweet there is no remedy. Our children must drink it or not, according to the caprice of fortune, who may or may not tender the chalice to them. As a matter of form we are bound to warn them. But we are scarcely likely to divert our offspring into the path of judicious affection which maturity has taught us is best for us.

There are also occupations which, though formerly a source of pure, invigorating pleasure, in time become dire pains. It may be that the change is wrought unconsciously. We have not seen the line of demarcation which indicates the "ne plus ultra" of pleasure. We have worked, and worked, and exhausted the charm of the hobby, unwittingly. And the more ardently we have embraced the pleasure, the more impossible it becomes to get severed from it. Not that we desire this. But our physician, if he be a shrewd diagnoser, will, without hesitation, pronounce the need of this divorce. "You have killed your pleasure," he might well say. "You must either cut yourself adrift from its corpse, or be content to die a slow and disagreeable death in company with the dead body."

You may see a thousand examples of this kind of deplorable folly in every square mile of the metropolis. Even though you do not know the men as individuals, you may know them as types. The business man, with abstracted gaze, bent head, lip of iron, and eye of ice; the business man, who moves through the streets as if they were part of a world in which he has no share; who sits at his desk for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, with no wandering thought to invigorate his bedulled and harassed brain; who talks mechanically, except on the one subject of his trade; who eats only in order that he may return refreshed to his counting-house; who to his sorrowful wife is less like a man than a bale of merchantable goods; and who regards his male offspring as but so many chips of his own counter, to be fashioned into mortals as wooden and soulless as himself—this man is the type of many to be found in all large cities. He entered life with enthusiasm, and with just those capacities that might raise him to the dignity of the merchant prince. His business was all in all to him. At first it was a pleasure—an honourable and laudable pleasure, moreover. But it comes to this, in only too many instances. He pays the penalty for his over-appreciation of his pleasure. The pleasure becomes a pain of so avaricious a nature, that it denies access to any genuine pleasure which sues for admission into the mind it has so cruelly monopolised.

In brisk contrast with this grave form of pleasure transformed, we may mention a painful pleasure, which, in our day, draws votaries as it never before drew them. The pain of this pleasure is at first so much more decided than the pleasure itself, that one wonders how the latter is able to overmaster it. In truth, however, other influences of a different kind here come into operation. Fashion, and the love of imitation are as potent agents upon conduct as moralists and mere sensation itself. And these are the two prime forces which lead the innocent youth of the land to put the first pipe between the lips, and to blow out the smoke of their fancy in grievous vexation of stomach.

Like sea-sickness, the pain consequent upon this early indulgence is truly indescribable. Its effects upon the mind of the victim are the converse of those of love upon the hearts of lovers. How ghastly the world! With what a dim pall of woe are all things clad! How infinite the suf-

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fering amid men and beasts, doomed fortuitously to inhabit a globe so cheerless, so cruel! And how odious a brute the friend who offered the fatal cigar, which it seemed an act of weakness to decline!

Some of us pass through this stage by degrees, which, if somewhat undignified, do, at any rate, modify the acuteness of the pain which attends upon a single bold effort to smoke like a practised adult. I confess my own judicious depravity of conduct in this respect. There were several of us together in one corner of the playground. The eldest may have been twelve years of age. I was ten. Fumarole, a dark-skinned urchin from some island in the West Indies, had received a fine cake by the carrier. It was indeed an excellent cake. Moreover, the cake was wrapped in a fold of thickish brown paper, rather more hirsute than is the mode with ordinary brown paper. Thus Fate put the temptation in our way.

The cake eaten, we divided the brown paper, and rolled it into as many cigars as there were individuals. Then, with a keen eye of watch towards the gate by which our master came and went, we lit our cigars, and timidly inhaled the horrid smoke. It was magnificent; but it was not genuine. Yet, though innocent of tobacco, the things had a sad effect upon three or four of us. Fumarole himself was untouched by the hand of suffering. It was extraordinary what a man of the world was this West Indian boy still some years distant from his teens. He puffed and smiled, and said it was awfully nice; nor did his stomach bear witness against him. And other hardened boys did like Fumarole.

But I, on my part, and Smithers and Buffer and Ronaldson respectively, paid the penalty for our presumption. Why should I renew the pangs of the past by a recital of them? Suffice to say that I withdrew to another corner of the playground, pretending that I wished to water a radish I was cultivating in a little garden of my own. There I sat me down on the railing and sighed. And there, half-an-hour afterwards, I was found by the master, still sighing. But kind Heaven now came to my aid with compensations. It was assumed that I was ill. And so I was sent upstairs to the matron, who gave me delicacies, and ordered me to bed when the delicacies were eaten.

On the whole, however, it is well not to expect Heaven to provide compensations when we misuse the gifts or opportunities that are put before us. Then, if the compensations appear, they are the more welcome. Above all, it is injudicious to be gluttons in pursuit of what we conceive to be pleasures. Otherwise our pleasures will, without fail, turn to scourges. There are few things more disagreeable than to be deceived by the person whom we esteemed the dearest of our friends.

SOME ODD IDEAS.

The Odd Ideas which the over-fanciful minds of philosophers and so-called men of science have brought forth, necessarily provoke a smile of mingled wonder and pity, they are at once so grotesque and so futile. As fools rush in where angels fear to tread, so these restless spirits have indulged in speculations on subjects the most mysterious and remote: subjects which common-sense is content to leave alone, as lying beyond the grasp of human reason, and offering no prospect of useful inquiry or fruitful research. Even the Creation has not been safe from their unprofitable ingenuity. Chevreau, in his "Histoire du Monde," records that some authorities have fixed this event as having taken place in Spring; others are obliging enough to furnish the precise date, namely, Friday, September the sixth, at four o'clock p.m.; while others go in for December the twenty-fourth. An Italian scholar of the eighteenth century, one Baïardi, informed the Abbé Barthelemy that he was engaged in writing an abridgement of "Universal History," which he intended to preface with a solution of a problem of the highest importance, both for astronomy and history; that is, the determination of the exact point of the heavens in which the Creator placed the sun when the world was being made! The Talmudists are able to furnish us with exact details of the incidents that marked some of the hours of the day on which Adam was created. Thus, during the first hour, the Creator kneaded the dust from which the First Man was fashioned, and it soon became an embryo. Second hour, Adam was able to stand upon his feet. Fourth hour, God summoned him, and bade him give to the animals the names they were to be known by. Seventh hour, marriage of Adam and Eve, whose hair had been exquisitely curled for the occasion! Tenth hour, Adam sinned. Eleventh hour, he

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was judged, and banished from Paradise. Twelfth hour, he began to experience the fatigue and pain of labour.

Adam, it is said, when first created stretched from one end of the world to the other; but, after he had sinned, the Creator passed His hand upon him and reduced him to the measurement of one hundred ells. Others add that this was done at the request of the angels, who were not unnaturally alarmed at his original gigantic proportions.

According to Monéri, Adam had a profound knowledge of all the sciences, and especially of astrology, many secrets of which he communicated to his children; and he engraved upon two tables various observations he had made on the course of the stars.

A man so learned would have been much to blame if he had not been willing that his descendants should profit by his acquirements; and, accordingly, he wrote a couple of treatises—one on the Creation, the other on the Divinity—two subjects, on both of which he was in a position to give the world some interesting information. Who will not regret that those books—original in the strictest sense—have not come down to us? It would seem that they escaped destruction at the Deluge, for a Mohammedan writer asserts that when Abraham visited the land of the Sabeans, he opened Adam's portmanteau, and found there his venerable ancestor's two precious volumes. Some rabbis attribute to Adam the composition of the one hundred and thirty-first Psalm!

But the wildest and most fantastic idea is that of the celebrated visionary Antoinette Bourignon, who died in 1680, and whose revelations are recorded in the "Vie Continuée de Mademoiselle Bourignon." She protested that God revealed to her, spiritually, Adam, the first man, whose body was purer and more transparent than crystal, and as light as air; in which and through which could be seen the vessels and channels of light which transpired through every pore—vessels wherein flowed liquids of all kinds and all colours, bright and diaphanous, not only water, and milk, and wine, but fire, air, and other "elemental substances." His movements were admirably harmonious; everything obeyed him, nothing resisted him, nothing could injure him. He was much taller than any of his present descendants, with hair short and curly, bordering upon black, and wore on the upper lip a slight moustache.

The Temptation and the Fall, as related in the Book of Genesis, are subjects which, as one can well imagine, have proved fruitful in conjectures to the rabbis, the ecclesiastical writers, and the visionaries of all countries and periods. Thus, some pretend that it was the spectacle of the loving caresses of Adam and Eve in their Paradisiacal innocence which filled the Serpent with a furious jealousy, and that, in order to get rid of Adam, he persuaded Adam's wife to eat of the Forbidden Fruit. Others affirm that Eve, misrepresenting the Divine words, and informing the Serpent that God had forbidden her to eat of this tree, or to touch it, the Tempter seized her, and pushed her against it; and that then, on his pointing out to her that she had suffered no harm from the contact, she was persuaded that she would also suffer no harm from eating of it—a conviction which her descendants have had the greatest reasons for regretting.

Opinions differ as to the form which the Tempter assumed in order to beguile the too credulous Eve. One is that Sammael, the Prince of Demons, presented himself mounted on a serpent as big as a camel; another, just as accurate, that the Serpent had borrowed the enticing countenance of a young girl—a tradition adopted by some of the mediæval artists.

Opinions differed also as to the length of time during which Adam enjoyed Paradise before he sinned. To these Dante refers in the "Paradiso," cxxvi., 139-142, thus rendered by Cary:

> Upon the mount
> Most high above the waters, all my life,
> Both innocent and guilty, did but reach
> From the first born to that which cometh next
> (As the sun changes quarter) to the sixth.

So that, in Dante's belief, our First Parents spent only nine hours in Eden, both before and after the Fall included. And so, in the "Historia Sabastica" of Petrus Cemastor, we read: "Lividum tradunt eos fuisse in Paradiso septem horas."

We are naturally led on to enquire where was Eden—this Paradise which our First Parents so quickly forfeited? Among the Hebrew traditions recorded by Saint Jerome, is one to the effect that it was created before the world came into existence, and therefore lay beyond its limits. Moses Bar Cepha places it midway between the earth and the firmament. Some one conceived the odd idea that it was on a mountain which reached nearly to the moon; and some one else that it was situated in the

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third region of the air, and was higher than all the mountains of the earth by twenty cubits, so that the Deluge was unable to reach it. Morinus preserves a theory that, before the Fall, the whole earth was Paradise—was, in fact, situated in Eden, in the midst of all kinds of festivities and felicities. Then as to its dimensions: While Ephraem Syrus maintains that it surrounded the earth, Johannes Tostatus restricts it to an area of forty miles in circuit—something less than the Isle of Wight; and others have made it extend over Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia.

The writer of the Book of Genesis having omitted to specify the kind of fruit of which Adam and Eve partook in the Garden, his silence has given rise to a host of odd ideas. Some persons assert that it was an apple; others, citron or pomegranate. Milton is wisely vague:

> A goodly tree
> Laden, with fruit of finest colours mixed,
> Ruddy and gold.

The Rabbi Solomon gives it as his opinion that Moses purposely concealed the name of the fruit, "whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe," for fear it would always be regarded with aversion.

According to Saint Jerome, Adam was buried at Hebron; according to other authorities, on Calvary. But both these statements are open to the objection that neither Hebron nor Calvary existed before the Deluge. "If this should trouble you," says Bayle, "Bar Cepha will repeat to you the assertion of a doctor much esteemed in Syria, that Noah dwelt in Judæa; that he planted in the plains of Sodom the cedars of which he built the ark; that he carried with him into the ark the bones of Adam; that, after abandoning the ark, he shared out the bones among his sons; that the skull fell to Shem, and that Shem's descendants, being put into possession of Judæa, they interred this skull on the spot where Adam's tomb had formerly stood."

But in Odd Ideas on these, and other subjects, the moderns do not fall far below the standard of the Rabbis and the Fathers of the Church. A French advocate, Jean le Féron, who flourished in the later years of the sixteenth century, and had a pretty taste in matters of heraldry, was good enough to lay down Adam's coat-of-arms. They were simplicity itself — three fig-leaves! Henrion, a member of the French Academy, and, in his day, of some repute as an Orientalist, undertook a series of researches into the weights and measures of the Ancients. That the Academy might have an idea of the treat in store for them, he brought forward a kind of chronological scale of the different statures of eminent personages from the Creation down to the Birth of Christ. As, for example: Adam was one hundred and twenty-five feet nine inches in height; Eve, one hundred and eighteen feet nine and three-quarter inches; Noah, one hundred and three feet; Abraham, twenty-seven feet; Moses, fifteen feet; Hercules, ten feet; Alexander, six feet; and Julius Cæsar, five feet. If this process of diminution had continued, it is appalling to think of the insignificance to which, by this time, man would have been reduced!

Escorbiac, a wretched French versifier, published, in 1613, "The Christiad," a poem, in which he included, among the sins which have flooded the world since the Fall, the making of bad rum. In the following century, another littérateur, the Chevalier de Causans, professed to explain the mysteries of Original Sin and the Trinity by the quadrature of the circle. He announced that he had deposited with a notary the sum of three hundred thousand francs, as the reward of those who succeeded in refuting his demonstration. But, as he would not admit that he was beaten, the payment of the three hundred thousand francs was postponed sine die.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, an audacious attempt was made to rob Adam of the honour of having been the First Man. Isaac de la Peyrère, in his odd book, "Præadamitæ, seu Exercitatio super versibus 12, 13, 14, capitis V Epistolæ B. Pauli ad Romanos," attempts to prove that there were two creations of men: the first, on the sixth day of the Creation of the World, when God created man, male and female, which must mean, he says, the creation of men and women in all parts of the earth, whence proceeded the Gentiles; the second did not take place until long afterwards, when Adam was created to become the father of the Jews. Those who accepted this theory were called Preadamites; the author, however, was compelled to abjure it at the feet of Pope Alexander the Seventh.

A few Odd Ideas, on miscellaneous subjects, we shall bring together without any attempt at classification.

Olaüs Rudbeck, a Swedish philosopher, who died in 1740, maintains in his "Ich-

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plain as in a map. Here and there, on the wide heath towards Wareham, little plantations of delicate firs resemble a box of painted toys, while from the sea cliffs vast flocks of wild fowl arrive with the ebbing-tide to feast upon the sea-waifs—a glorious prospect of land and sea, well worth an hour's toil to enjoy.

Between the barren heath of Fitzworth and Long Island, a glimpse of Ower Passage and its pretty homesteads are dimly seen in the haze. Here was an ancient ferry from Poole, long fallen into disuse.

Between Brownsea and Furze Island a palpitating line of seemingly fast-flowing tide is visible outside the harbour, "Haven Point Hotel" dancing up and down in the rarefied air as if it were a marionette. White and tan sail vessels glide in on shining water, with, to all appearance, five or six jibs and no hull; and North Haven Point, in reality very little above the sea level, has all the appearance of a steep cliff.

Brownsea is crowned with wind-bent pines, and is honeycombed on this front with clay mining. The tall chimneys and pottery works, silent and lonely, are hardly so attractive as the other three sides; but the estuary of Poole is nothing if not lonely and untrodden.

The town itself—with its forest of laden ships, its forty chimneys and huge blue factory—on the contrary, is always up and doing. Even as we look, a train speeds away past Hamworthy, with white puffs of cloudy steam mingling with the trees, till it reappears again with a tremendous hollow reverberation when crossing a viaduct over the shallow waters of Lychet Bay, and so we creep through the many windings of Ball's Lake, encountering the "Comet," with her clay barges, back to the place from which we started off Shipstall.

WYCH.

If Lord Eldon is ubiquitous at Arne, no less so is Mr. Calcraft, of Rempstone, at Wych. All the islands in Poole, except Brownsea, including Round and Long Islands, Furze and Green Islands, and the peninsulas of Fitzworth and Ower, Goathorn, and Greenland, with Wych and Bushey, own him as Lord of the Manor. His sway extends over the Royal Chase to Wareham, and from Challow Hill, overlooking Corfe Castle, up to the highest ridge of Nine Barrow Down, at the foot of which his house, at Rempstone, snugly sheltered from easterly winds, is hardly visible from any point of view save the downs above.

Leaving our anchorage, at Shipstall, at low tide, one makes sure of getting up to Wych without sticking in the mud for more than half an hour or so. Soon after sunrise, at low water, there is seldom any wind to speak of on a fine summer's morning. A jib and foresail, aided by the tide, is thus all that is needed to waft you up to higher waters. With the mainsail on her, should you take the ground in the narrow reaches, her sharp stem wedges itself firmly into the mud, where you remain lamenting till floated off by the rising tide.

The booms in Wych Channel, as far as Middlebere, leave nothing to be desired, being sufficiently numerous to keep you straight as far as the fork, where the well-staked Middlebere Lake leads to the clay depôts, while the now quite unused Wych Lake takes a sharp curve to the left; the bar, a hard sand drift, crossing the channel obliquely, with about five feet on it in one spot at low water. At this time of tide the channel is perfectly plain, whole families of decayed stumps, an inch or two out of the mud, being visible on either side. The only human habitation in sight is a farm-house, without so much as the shelter of one lone tree to relieve its bareness, on the most exposed part of Fitzworth. It is here, in the great rush and sedge tracts, bordering the shingle beach, that barrow-ducks, dab chicks, and heron are "at home." They receive you with much curiosity, but quite without fear, the barrow-ducks allowing the yacht's bows to glide nearly into the midst of a brood before the little, fluffy, yellow-and-brown chicks think it necessary to get out of the way, by diving head-foremost into the water, reappearing the instant after, astern, as gay as ever.

Among the shingle on these nearly inaccessible shores, robbs lay their little plover-like eggs, leaving them quite unsheltered, as do penguins and grebes in uninhabited islands; while the barrow-ducks, too idle to make a nest for themselves, find a convenient rabbit-hole in the bank—adverse circumstances having prevented the owner returning one sad day—in which they proceed to lay their eggs and bring up a young family in other folks' homes.

Round and Long Island, as we glide on, unfold many beauties, and, on the other side, we see the pine-clad crest of Arne, the grey

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little church on its grassy knoll, with all the village clustering round, and the little seedling firs in regular gradations stretching away to Combe and Middlebere. The latter is aptly named in ancient Celtic, the word signifying a low marsh overgrown with scrub, or a withy bed. It is much changed by drainage in these days—a large and smiling farm flourishing at Middlebere, through which an iron road runs, bringing china-clay from Norden, close to Corfe, down to the wharf at Middlebere.

Fitzworth, too, at first belies itself, for it is only on some views that the house is absolutely bare and unclothed. Under the hill behind, several fine trees droop over the cow-byre, and stack-yard, all farmed by Mr. Calcraft himself. The Wych Channel becomes quite serpentine in the higher reaches, and two blind creeks, wide and enticing, like American tracks—which begin so promisingly, and end up a gum-tree—are to be avoided. The sweeps—that is, large oars worked on crutches, are much in requisition about this period, notwithstanding which, an ominous scraping under her keel is heard, suggestive of hard, gravelly bottom. At the confluence of the Neas with the Corfe River, are two aged posts on either side, and here, midchannel, in a hole twenty feet deep, caused by the scour of the Neas River, we bring up, the two cables are taken round the posts, and we swing in the middle. The windings of Wych Lake come to an end, as far as navigation is concerned, at the ferry, about one mile from our posts, where the gaunt skeleton of a large pier still remains, where formerly the pipe-clay from Thrasher's Pits, on the way to Corfe, was shipped. A ferry of some importance across to Middlebere existed here, though where the traffic came from or went to, is now difficult to conceive. The ancient ferry-house is a labourer's cottage, with thick walls, a hoary, sloping roof, and deep, sheltered porch; but a refuge for man and beast in the shape of a large cow-house and barn has long been unroofed and grass-grown. A lovely, secluded turf lane, lined with lady-fern, leads through the gate to Wych Farm on the left, where excellent eggs, cream, and butter may be had, and straight on over Wych Heath to Corfe Castle.

A glance at the Chart of Poole Harbour —Potter and Company, Poultry, London, price two shillings and sixpence — will show the waste of lonely waters that surrounds you on every side. When lying at the posts off Neas Point, the chimneys of Fitzworth Cottage are just in sight over the sand hill, and the roof of the ferry-house at Wych can be seen; but no living eyes, save those of the sheep and rabbits, or the sea birds on the wing, look at you with wonder from the gorse hills. When the mud shoots, and especially in bad weather, the sea-birds look like a snow-storm, wheeling and circling, and finally alighting, with outstretched wings, upon the shallows, till, finding something to their liking, they quiet down and gorge themselves. In the pools of Neas River, luggs (worms), and minute shell-fish exist in enormous numbers, as the wild-duck well know.

A pair of herons live in the high reed islands towards Middlebere, and come solemnly out to feed at the right time of tide, as if by clock-work, prancing about with high-stepping gait, and neck outstretched, perfectly unconcerned at the proximity of the yacht. Soon after sunrise, as many as thirteen herons have been seen stalking over the mud in about six inches of water, within a hundred yards of us. The fishermen, helpless to prevent their depredations, as they are forbidden to shoot them, have a peculiar dislike to these birds, as they stand in the eel-holes and shallow pools, and gobble up an enormous amount of fish, in an especially aggravating manner. They appear to have a wholesome horror of being drowned, keeping their wings outspread, if there is any danger of slipping out of their depth, being unable to swim.

Over this great expanse of shining water the gorgeous tints of sunset are reflected with wonderful exactness, while, after it has gone down behind the hills over Creech, and the tints are fast fading, a keen, wet sea fog very frequently rolls in from Studland over the "little sea," and the low-lying heaths of Rempstone and Wych, covering and shrouding the towers of Corfe, and flooding the valley to Wareham.

With night, on Wych Lake, are heard all sorts of curious sounds from the bird and insect world. Teal and heron, snipe and mallard, fly low overhead, the fanning of their wings being distinctly audible. Fish leap alongside, escaping from their foes; even a shoal of porpoises once rolled and splashed, and bored past us up to the ferry, returning with the tide.

In summer, in these estuaries, the wind usually dies away towards evening, and a stillness perfectly extraordinary

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settles down over all; while little, sharp, black sedge islets, bathed in a lake of crimson, and the deep gloom of Arne trees are reflected miles over the quiet water, and the yacht herself has an exact double under water, as clear, sharp, and plain as the original.

Later, when every respectably-behaved bird ought to be asleep, the denizens of reed bed and sedge island select that moment to pursue the family quarrels, which seem never-ending among them. They croak and grumble, squawk and quack, with every conceivable gradation of note — angry, aggressive, plaintive, distressed, vituperative, and sleepy—sometimes only complaining of an especially damp nest; sometimes lamenting the departure of one of their chicks, a victim to a fierce old water rat, who drags it, shrieking, off to a burrow under the rush roots, and then there is a terrible to-do among the surviving parents and relations.

The birds who breed in Wych Lake are brown duck, barrow duck, teal, moorhen, robb, snipe, plover, curlew, pewit, heron, shag, and diver. Herons, here, contrary to their usual habit of building their nests on the hanging branches of trees, make them among the high reeds. Those who visit the upper waters in bad weather, or to feed, are widgeon, redhead, spoonbill, wild-duck, coote, grebe, sea-gull, geese, pintail, cormorant, crane, and puffin.

One of its greatest charms is the entire absence of human life in Wych Lake. Here no tourist comes, here are no steam-launches, or fashionable people. One is alone with Nature, ever a beloved and attractive companion to those who love her. It is a sweet, fresh, pure spot, the keen salt wind rushes in from seaward, and gives place in its turn to the soft land breeze, which steals over the heath and fir clad valley, bringing with it the delicious purity of a dry, sandy soil, which makes the air off a heather-covered sand-tract so bright and exhilarating.

We sit on deck after dinner till night has blotted out all save the lights of Poole, which burn, and glow, and flicker miles away over the quiet water. When tired and chill, what a charming prospect the cabin presents as we descend and close the doors, into a bright, warm, cheery habitation, well-lighted with silver lamps, reflected over and over again in the looking-glass panels — red silk curtains, and blinds closely drawn, and two folding arm-chairs inviting to repose and tobacco, one on each side of the nickel-plated stove, where a bright little fire of Welsh coal blazes up cheerfully; while heaps of papers and nice new books are piled up on the Sutherland table in our midst. Except during a few of the highest spring tides, the vessel is calm and peaceful all night, secured to the posts; but when "springs have taken on," and a gentle breeze springs up about midnight, a regular saturnalia, especially trying to light sleepers, goes on. First comes a curious grating sound, caused by the cable tightening, which has previously been lying on the ground; then a continual slapping, flapping, and knocking begins, particularly exasperating, which is said to be "only the halliards chattering as the wet comes out of the rope." Sleep, then, appears possible, when — swirl, grate, grind, the tide catches her bow, and the chains grate over the coppered stem, making one feel quite giddy. Then a great stillness, as the tide sweeps strongly up, gurgling alongside as it laps past. Soon after, creak and chatter, ad nauseam, with the halliards again.

Why in the world does it not wake the men and drive them on deck to secure that fiendish rope? but they both sleep the sleep of the weary—deep and profound —if one may judge by the groans and snorts from the forecastle, muffled by distance and blankets.

There is excellent landing alongside the rails inside Neas Point at high water to half-ebb, to the disgust and indignation of a colony of pewits, who own some nests hard by among the rushes and bents. With great idiotcy they draw attention to the fact by wheeling with drooping wings round in a circle, uttering the loudest cries, and approaching so near in their anxiety as to fan you with their powerful pinions. A whole fleet of barrow-ducks, just hatched in a rabbit-hole, put to sea, escorted by their two anxious parents, as our boat heaves in sight, so small, yellow, and fluffy, that it must certainly be their first occasion of taking the water. However, they know all about it, and conduct themselves like experienced ducks of the world. One parent leads; and we fancied the father brings up the rear in a general way, to see that no stragglers fall behind, or any of that sort of thing, whipping in with great promptitude, and an angry chevy at the slightest sign of lagging. They are large, heavy birds, and excellent eating, albeit the flesh is rather red.

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Charming walks may be taken from Neas Point over the heath and sand-tracts to Fitzworth and Ower; and by boat the Neas River may be navigated some little distance, till further progress is barred by an impenetrable wall of tall green reeds six or seven feet high, feathery oat grass, and strong yellow iris. Reed-cutting is, about here, one of the farm-labourer's few winter occupations; and, hidden among the reed-beds, he lurks after dark in his mud flat, waiting for the flight of fowl, then paddling after the fallen game into the open mere. Though Wych is more especially the home of the sea-fowl, whose piercing, melancholy, agonised screams, rend the air when bad weather impends, the bittern still utters its melancholy cry by night in Neas and Corfe Rivers; and larks in enormous flights hover high over their nests in the coarse water-meadows. Cuckoos, too, fly from Arne Wood over Wych in the evening shadows, hurrying by with nervous, uncertain cry, as they wing their steady, swift, unswerving flight to a neighbouring tree, from whence they cuckoo forth their gladness at having reached a safe haven. The windings of Wych Lake from the posts to the ferry are distracting when the mud is covered; and result in stranding you on many a treacherous point where the booms have disappeared during the previous winter. Landing beside the old crumbling pier, and stepping gingerly on the stones to avoid being planted up to the ankles in masses of slippery white clay — a bygone legacy from Thrasher's Pits, the clay from whence was last shipped here about forty years ago — a smooth green patch of fine turf leads past the solid old rubble walls and ruins of a barn to the cottage opposite, whose thick walls and hoary old thatched roof show what the builders of other days did to keep folks warm. Here is a well, not immaculate, and a productive garden where vegetables may be had. Wych Farm, owned of course by Mr. Calcraft, has recently changed hands; its sturdy old walls and capacious chimney corner are quite an ideal of comfort. Hard toil, however, is required winter and summer to make anything like a living out of the rush and bracken-covered fields, where the soil is especially poor and sandy.

In spring the bare meadows are studded with wild hyacinth, orchis, and cowslip, while in summer the wet ditches which divide them from the rolling heath are choked with great, strong growths of Osmunda Regalis, the Royal fern, six or seven feet high, whose tall spikes of green flower shoot up from their massive woody roots. "Blechnum spicant" lines the black watercourses, and "aspidium oreopteris," though essentially a dry mountain fern, grows in huge clumps over three feet high in the ditches at Wych Ferry. When getting up a giant root, especial care must be taken, as the fronds, when young, are so extremely brittle that they break off at the merest touch.

Many charming expeditions may be made on foot, from Wych Ferry, by the able-bodied, with a pair of thick boots and skirts curtailed. In anything like dry weather a walk to the secluded hamlet of Bushey—turning off to the left by the farm—well repays a little exertion in leaping from stone to stone and occasionally floundering into a damper hollow when crossing the low-lying portion of Wych Heath, or skirting a peat morass that experience proves to be decidedly untrustworthy; but it is here, among the damp, black soil, where the water in tiny stagnant pools reflects every hue of the rainbow, that the great, deep-blue gentian—now nearly drained off the face of the earth in England—and enormous clumps of the blechnum fern flourish in greatest beauty. When plucking a handful of the blue gentian, one feels regret at the cruel theft, remembering how precious and scarce they are; but no eye save your own will rest upon their deep-blue trumpets, and none will miss them. The hollow of Wych Heath is the last spot known to me where this beautiful flower still lingers.

After passing the heath, a few seedling firs creep forth to welcome the traveller, till the shadow of a small covert is gained, from whence a gate leads into a glorious fir-wood, with a formidable stile guarding its sanctity. Lonely and untrodden it is, but cool and silent, except for the scuttering rush of a rabbit, which flees before you, or a partridge, strong on the wing from a neighbouring covert. A tidy little church, used also as a school during the week, together with a few cottages, complete the clean, little village of Bushey. The Rector of Corfe, or one of his Curates, comes over on Sunday afternoons for service, and collects together a sprinkling of worshippers from far-away Greenland, Goathorn, Ower Farm, and Wych, not to speak of the Squire and his excellent mother at Rempstone, whose following principally fills the little building.

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It is here at Bushey that our letters arrive, and are called for by one or other of us every day.

From Bushey, the clean, hard chalk road may be followed to Rempstone and Studland, or through narrow, tortuous lanes, like so many in Dorsetshire, where the cramped hedges take liberal toll from the great waggon-loads of ripe grain as they sweep by, up to the Corfe road. Thrift is unknown here; though the wages are so low, great heavy ears of wheat and barley strew the ditches on either side, and dangle on each hedge-spike, till the birds, more observant than man, have made a glorious feast upon the full kernels. Many shocks of corn might have been collected between Bushey and Brianscomb Farm, whither the waggon-loads were bound.

A near way to Corfe lies through the old farmstead of Brianscomb, through a deep wood, and so up to the down above; or following the usual road round the foot of Challow Hill, also brings you with less exertion into the ancient town of Corfe Castle.

MARGERY.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

CHAPTER III.

It was a chilly May evening, and a bright little fire was burning in one of the two fireplaces in the long drawing-room of a country house in the north of England. There was no other light in the room as yet, and the flickering flames threw strange shadows about, and danced merrily and waveringly on walls, carpet, hardly definable furniture, and on a little figure which was seated on the fender with hands clasped round her knees, and bent head. Margery had kept herself steadily to her needlework as long as the light lasted, but, as it died away, she had let her hands fall into her lap, almost unconsciously, and had sat on, the needle still in her hand, musing. By-and-by she had slipped from her chair down on to her favourite seat, the fender; and there she had sat for the last half-hour, almost motionless, gazing into the fire. She was half-wondering, half-dreaming—wondering what the next few hours would bring her, dreaming of the life that lay before her. She was in Douglas Hollis's house for the first time, and she was waiting for him to bring home his wife. She knew nothing of "Estelle," as Douglas had taught her to call her, beyond what she had seen on the wedding-day when she had been one of the bridesmaids. Various circumstances had prevented their meeting before, and the three months that had elapsed since then had been spent by Douglas Hollis and his wife in Egypt. She was not forming resolutions as to her new life—she had done that already—she was not thinking of the different coming home she had pictured to herself during her school days; even at the moment of her solitary arrival she had crushed down any thought of that kind. As she sat there so still, so gentle and sweet in attitude and expression, she was simply dreaming vague, endless dreams of how she would take care of Douglas Hollis's wife — and Douglas. The entrance of a servant with lamps roused her at last, and she took up her work again as he put them about the room, throwing a particularly bright light over those chairs and tables that were nearest the fire. It was a pretty room, very pretty indeed, at first sight; and it looked its best under the soft, shaded lamplight. It was narrow and rather long, with the door at one end faced by a large bow window, and an entrance to a conservatory. It was furnished in the Louis Seize style, and the quaint, straight-backed seats, with their rich brocade and inlaid woodwork, the tall palms, the lovely china, the quaint silver nicknacks, were perfect in their dainty freshness. But there was a certain air of formal correctness over the whole — the chilly newness of a room that had not yet been lived in, of a room that seemed to be waiting for a mistress. Only the radius over which the firelight danced, seemed to be warmed and brightened by something besides the hot coals and the lamp. The curly head bent over the lace pinafore which Margery was making for little Elsie Downing; the sweet, serious face, with the cheeks slightly flushed, the eyes bright and shining, a little smile every now and then curving the lips, seemed to neutralise its immediate surroundings, and make them home-like.

She had sat there for another half-hour, working with an industry which was, perhaps, a safety-valve for a certain irrepressible feeling of excitement that grew on her as time passed on, when the sudden sound of footsteps and voices in the hall, softened as they were by distance, made

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her start as if their subdued murmur had been a clap of thunder.

She rose with a little cry of joy, and was going to run out of the room when, all at once, her strength seemed to leave her, and, icy cold and trembling from head to foot, she caught at the mantelpiece for support. Only for an instant though. Almost before she had time to wonder at herself it had passed again, and, as Douglas Hollis opened the door and led his wife down the room, she ran towards them with her hands outstretched, her eyes and cheeks even brighter than before.

"Welcome home, dear Estelle; Douglas, welcome home," she said.

"Thank you, little one; that's a pleasant word," replied he, as Estelle returned her kiss. "It is good to find you here to receive us; but I'm afraid your own home-coming must have been a trifle dreary. I wish it could have been managed for you to meet us in London; but it seemed impossible."

"Oh, don't trouble about that. I was all right. I've only been longing for you to come, and I'm so glad to be here to welcome home the master and mistress. I am afraid Estelle is very tired. I can begin to take care of her at once, you see; may I?" She turned to Estelle with something in her manner that was rather shy and appealing. "Will you let me?" she said, looking at her wistfully, with the eyes that were more than ever like the eyes of a collie as she spoke. "There is nothing I want so much to do."

Estelle looked at her for a moment without answering. She was a tall, slender, fair woman, very graceful in movement and pose, perfectly calm and self-possessed, and, as she looked down into the eager, sensitive face raised to hers, they presented as sharp a contrast as could be found between woman and woman. But, as she looked, something in the beseeching eyes seemed to touch Estelle. Her cold face softened, and she said, in the low, clear, beautifully-modulated voice which had helped to charm away her husband's heart:

"Take care of me? You want to take care of me?"

"Yes," said Margery. "You will let me. I mean, you will let me help Douglas?"

She put out her hand a little timidly —Estelle was so very still—and took the hand on which the wedding-ring was shining. At her soft, entreating touch the blue eyes into which she looked changed altogether, and Estelle stooped and kissed her.

"Thank you," she said.

"That's all settled, then," said Douglas, who had looked on with a certain air of anxiety, and now spoke in a tone in which there was the faintest possible ring of relief. "Margery will have her heart's desire, now! But she is quite right, my darling; you do look dreadfully tired. Dinner is what you want. Shall we go and get ready at once?"

She turned to him as he spoke—the feeling that had touched her face for an instant gone from it again—and answered him carelessly: "Perhaps it will be best." Then, as he took from her the cloak which she had picked up from the chair, on to which she had let it fall, with a tender smile and a gesture that was almost a caress, she said merely "Thank you," with a hardly perceptible answering smile, and passed on by his side out of the room.

"Now, this is what I call jolly," exclaimed Douglas Hollis, a little later, as they seated themselves at the dinner-table.

Estelle—looking lovelier than ever, Margery thought, in her green velvet dinner-dress—made no reply, and Margery said, with a laugh:

"Which, Douglas? Dinner, your own house, or your company?"

"All three," he answered, in the same tone; "only you've put them in the wrong order. My company comes first, of course, and dinner last; but the last is by no means unimportant, as you would know, if you had had no meal to speak of since eight o'clock this morning, and had been living for three months in a comparatively uncivilised country! Well, little one," he went on, "what's the news? How are the Downings?"

"Very well, all of them, and madly excited about the wedding."

"Ah, yes; of course they would be. When is it to be, did you say?"

"Next month — the thirtieth. They have had the loveliest presents. One of Alice's aunts gave her a piano the other day, and Basil has had a drawing-room carpet and the silver, a splendid dinner-service — oh, quantities of things. The bridesmaids' frocks were the great excitement when I came away. Minnie and Alice never meet you without producing various small scraps of material for inspection and approval."

"And is it settled about Will?"

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Margery coloured.

"Yes," she said, in rather a low voice. "He goes to Canada directly the wedding is over. They are so sorry about it."

Estelle had not yet spoken a word, and now, after a moment's pause, Margery turned to her and said:

"Did you find Egypt as uncivilised as Douglas seems to have done? What did you think of it?"

The question did not seem to interest Estelle, and she answered indifferently:

"I did not mind the absence of civilisation."

Neither the words nor the tone were encouraging to the growth of an infant conversation, and Margery felt disconcerted. She stole a look at Douglas. His eyes, in which she had never yet seen any deeper feeling than kindliness and good temper, were fixed upon his wife with a look of longing, questioning pain, which must have risen in them suddenly, as he turned them on her, for it had certainly not been there when Margery met them the moment before. Startled, and almost disbelieving her own eyes, she turned instinctively and looked, as he was looking, at Estelle. She was sitting with one elbow on the table, her smooth, pale cheek supported on her beautiful hand, her eyes fixed on the bread which she was crumbling in the other hand. Every line of her face and figure expressed weariness and indifference. A subtle shock ran through Margery. What was it? Why did they look like that? With an instinctive desire to make a change of some kind, she said hastily and inconsequently:

"What a lovely place this is! I had no time, to-day, to explore beyond the garden; but I am longing for to-morrow, that I may go about." Unconsciously fearing the effect of another indifferent reply from Estelle, she did not actually refer to her again, but went on, addressing no one in particular. "I passed a wood on my way up from the station, that looked too tempting. Of course, you couldn't see to-night; but the ground was regularly carpeted with wild-flowers. Like fairy-land it seemed to a wretched little Cockney like me!"

As she spoke, the look that had so startled her vanished from Douglas's eyes as suddenly as it had sprung into them. He made some trivial answer, in his usual cheery, kindly manner, and the rest of the dinner-time passed away in talk of the same kind, Estelle joining in it very seldom, and then with an absolutely uninterested tone and manner. But she was, evidently, very tired, and although Margery fancied still that there was something curiously uncertain and troubled in Douglas's attitude towards his wife, she began to persuade herself that the sudden shock she had received was the result of her imagination only. She looked at Douglas anxiously, as he sat in the full light of the lamp in the drawing-room afterwards. Estelle had gone to the piano, and was playing softly—more to herself, it seemed, than to them—and he was looking, not at her, but at the carpet at his feet. Margery was sitting a little behind him. She could see only the outline of his face; but, as she watched him, a feeling crept over her that he was changed—vaguely, undefinably, but certainly changed. Now that he was in repose, there was something about him that she had never seen before, something patient, grave, sad. As the conviction grew on her, Margery felt a sudden agonising pain shoot through her heart, as if an icy clutch had suddenly tightened round it. Something had hurt him; he was in pain—Douglas! She must do something for him; she could not bear to see him look like that. For a moment the impulse to go to him and beseech him to let her help him, was almost overwhelming, and before she had recovered herself Estelle had risen from the piano, which stood at the farther end of the room, and advanced into the brighter light in which they were sitting, and Douglas, as if roused by her movement, rose too, with the same sudden and absolute change of manner which had reassured her at dinner.

"I wonder how our neighbours will turn out?" he said, as he stood before the fire, looking tenderly at his wife. "They told me that the people at the house on the hill were nice—a mother and two sons, I think; but they are spending the summer abroad, I believe."

"That big house with the beautiful garden, do you mean?" said Margery. "It, somehow, looks as if nice people lived there."

"You ridiculous child," replied Douglas, smiling at her. "That is just like one of your fancies. 'Nasty' people are quite as likely as nice people to have their garden properly attended to, and their houses painted, and so forth, when it is necessary. And I suppose it is only the outside of Holme from which you have judged."

Margery laughed. She was quite used

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to having her fancies "jeered at," as she said, and never objected to the process. But Estelle said:

"I understand what she means, perfectly well; and I also understand that it seems to you absurd."

He had turned towards her quickly, when she began to speak, and as she finished, with a slight touch of scorn in her voice, he smiled at her wistfully. She went on:

"Now, on our way to-night, we passed a cottage on the side of a hill, about half a mile away—at least it did not seem to be more than a cottage, though there was, apparently, a good deal of garden. I could only see the outline and the lights in the windows, and yet, as we went slowly by up the hill, I felt perfectly certain that nice people did not live there—that nasty people did."

"That cottage?" said her husband. "I remember. Garden Cottage they call it. It was empty when we came down to see the house; but I noticed to-night that there were lights in the window, as you say. I wonder who lives there!"

"I wonder, too," said Estelle.

It was her first expression of interest in her new home and its surroundings, and Douglas answered it with an eager gladness that seemed rather disproportionate to the occasion.

"It is very easy to find out the name, at least," he said. "The servants are sure to know. I will ring and ask."

"It is of very little consequence, after all," said Estelle; but her voice had lost the ring of indifference, and he rang the bell.

"Do you know the name of the people at Garden Cottage, James?" he asked the man who answered it. "When was it taken?"

"The gentleman came down two days ago, sir. It was left to him, I believe, by the lady as it belonged to. She never lived there herself, sir. The gentleman's name, sir? His name is—what is it now? Bailey? No, it ain't Bailey. It's not a common name, sir, and it's slipped my memory for the moment. Bazerley—that's it, sir. Bazerley."

"Bazerley!" repeated Douglas. "No, it's not a common name. Is he going to live here altogether?"

"Only for the summer, sir, they say. It's a little bit of a cottage, sir; but the grounds is lovely."

"Ah!" said Douglas. "You can go, James." Then, as the man left the room, he added: "Well, Mr. Bazerley is our nearest neighbour for the summer, at least, so I hope your presentiment as to his character may be mistaken, Estelle."

But Estelle's interest in the subject seemed to have died out with the gratification of her momentary curiosity.

"Perhaps," she said, indifferently. "I am tired. I will go to bed, I think."

CHAPTER IV.

"It's a dreadful trial, certainly, and the worst of it is, that it is only number one!"

Margery spoke merrily. The dreadful trial in question did not apparently weigh heavily on her spirits; and Douglas Hollis, to whom she had addressed her remark, retorted, with a burlesque of indignant gloom:

"It is all very well for you, young woman; you don't appreciate its horrors now as you will to-night. You didn't see the Camdens when they called, and you are altogether in a state of blissful ignorance as to what is before you."

Breakfast was just over, and he was standing by the open window, on the low sill of which Margery had perched herself, while she scattered some crumbs on the gravel outside for the birds. The sun was streaming into the room, and through the window the green lawn, the far-off woods, and the bright blue sky made a pretty little picture, framed in the softly-moving leaves of the creeper, which grew round and peeped into the room.

They had been settled at Orchard Court for three weeks now, and the event in question was the first of a series of dinner-parties given in honour of the new-comers by the old inhabitants of the neighbourhood. It was an eminently respectable and cautious neighbourhood, and the news of the arrival of the "new people" had called forth no impulsive gush of welcome. In the opinion of the inhabitants of Hackley, it was impossible to be too careful in admitting strange people into the sacred circle of Hackley society; and, until the Orchard Court people had given satisfactory proofs of their fitness for the honour, none but the most formal advances must be made them. The heads of society had called in a stiff and stately fashion; Mrs. Douglas Hollis had, after a due interval, returned the calls, and, these preliminaries having been satisfactorily concluded, Mrs. Camden, the leader of Hackley fashion, pronounced in favour of the new-

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comers, and proceeded to seal her verdict by issuing invitations for a large and solemn dinner-party, which was to give them a footing in the neighbourhood for ever after. Unfortunately, the satisfaction was all on one side. The social authorities found the Hollises "really quite nice people;" the young people, who were, strange to say, an uninfluential minority at Hackley, thought them "most charming," though both sections were a little awed by Mrs. Hollis's beauty, and her cold, unresponsive manner.

But the objects of this approbation did not in the least reciprocate it. The house was charming, the country delightful, but the people were hopelessly and undeniably dull; and it had occurred to Margery several times that she had really never before understood how much pleasant neighbours contributed to the happiness of life. She never allowed herself to wonder whether it was quite fair to lay upon their surroundings all responsibility for the fact to which she tried in vain to shut her eyes — the fact that the days passed very slowly at Orchard Court; that bed-time was watched for, and eagerly welcomed. She had taken Estelle to her faithful, affectionate heart with the kiss with which she had welcomed her home; and after that first evening, when she had been startled and distressed by a sense of indefinable pain in the atmosphere which she had expected to find one of radiant happiness and content, she had unconsciously but resolutely declined to acknowledge anything but what she had expected to find in the life about her. It was a great pity, of course, that there were no amusing people about; no families that they could possibly wish to know well; nothing whatever to look forward to in that way. Of course, Estelle was a little—well, not bored, nobody could be bored with Douglas—but just a little dull now and then. She had been used to such a bright life—people always coming in and out; dances; boating-parties; all kinds of things always going on. Oh, of course it was a change for her! It was all very well for herself, she had never been used to that kind of life, and she was always happy in the country; but it was very different for Estelle.

Estelle was still sitting at the breakfast-table, looking listlessly over her letters. She had not joined Douglas in his groanings, nor had she seconded Margery in her mock attempts at consolation. Margery never acknowledged to herself how large a part of their conversation fell to her share; never knew how often silence would have fallen upon them but for her always bright and ready chatter; never even suspected that when Estelle was drawn for a moment into their talk it was by her influence alone. Estelle was quiet, and she was a chatterbox, and Douglas—— but when Margery found herself watching or thinking of Douglas now, she always stopped herself and turned to something else.

She finished sprinkling her crumbs in spite of Douglas's assurances that it was merely pauperising the birds to feed them in the summer, and then returned to the subject of the dinner.

"I wonder whether we shall meet the new-comer, Mr. Bazerley? I wonder whether he finds Hackley society as heavy as we do? It would be consoling to compare notes. It is strange that we have never met him about, living so near. Don't you think so, Estelle?"

Estelle raised her head wearily.

"Don't I think what, dear?" she said. "I didn't hear." She rose as she spoke, and, walking to the other window, stood there looking out, while she said: "I think it was a great mistake to come and live in the country."

Before Margery could utter the laughing rejoinder with which she was always ready, Douglas had walked up to his wife and, putting his hand very gently on hers, said:

"Would you be happier in town, Estelle? It was your wish, when—at Ventnor — that we should live in the country. You told me you were tired of society life."

She did not move. The hand he held lay perfectly passive and irresponsive in his hold, and she answered, listlessly:

"Was it? Yes, I dare say. I've changed my mind, I suppose."

"Shall we go to London in the winter—or, abroad? Or would you like to go away at once? What would you like, Estelle? Tell me!"

His fingers tightened round the passive hand he held, and she disengaged them as he finished, and drew a little away as she said:

"I really have very little feeling on the subject. We may as well pass the summer here, I suppose."

Margery had turned her head away, and she did not see the look of reproachful longing and the gesture of uncomprehend-

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ing pain with which Douglas Hollis turned away. But the silence which followed struck her as peculiar, and with the dislike to such silences which had become instinctive with her during the last three weeks, she slipped off her seat on the window-ledge, and said:

"Shall we go out, Estelle? It is a shame to waste this lovely morning. If Douglas's dreary forebodings are to be realised to-night, we may as well prepare ourselves for the ordeal by a nice day."

Margery had several times felt, not without wonder at herself for the feeling, that those morning walks with Estelle were the easiest part of the day. She never asked herself the reason—she had taken to evading such questions lately—but she vaguely felt that though Estelle was not less quiet and passive at those times, they were a pleasure to her, too. They had explored a great part of the neighbourhood together, riding or driving in a desultory, discursive manner, and now Margery proposed that they should drive to a place called Offley Moor, from which they had been told there was a remarkably fine view. The day was glorious, and, as they drove along the winding, undulating roads, it seemed to Margery's town-bred eyes that it would be difficult to surpass the views that met them at every turn—little wooded nooks, sheltering murmuring streams; broad meadows, stretching up and down, divided by low hedges, and stone walls; with here and there a quaint little village buried in a valley, or climbing up the hillside, with its stone cottages, its winding, hilly street, and its rough little church. But when a sudden turn in the road brought before them the view of which they had heard so much, she gave a little cry, and bent forward with clasped hands and parted lips. Her first impression was that she had never understood before what space was—that she had never been able to breathe before then. From where the carriage stood the land sloped downwards abruptly for some fifty feet, and then stretched away in front and on the right hand in what seemed to her an endless expanse of undulating meadow, wood, and water. A sudden turn of the road on their left, by which a rough green slope shut out the country on that side, seemed only to emphasize the vast sweep of the rest; and, as she looked, there came to Margery the sense that comes at times to all to whom Nature really appeals, though they may never see her at her grandest and most impressive—the sense of the utter insignificance of those troubles that originate in the falseness and artificiality of life—the sense of a power and purpose above anything that we can see—the sense of rest and confidence in that power. She was so absorbed as she sat there, her eyes shining, her lips quivering a very little, that she did not hear the footsteps of a man who was coming up the road behind them, and she turned with a violent start as a voice from the other side of the carriage said suddenly:

"Miss Humpherys! What an utterly unexpected pleasure!"

Estelle had been sitting by her side, graceful and quiet as usual, her eyes resting with a softer expression than they often wore, not on the view, but on the absorbed little face by her side. At the sound of the voice the slightest possible start ran through her; a faint flush rose in her pale, calm face; and turning slowly towards it she said, with an accent of extreme surprise, but holding out her hand with the most perfect self-possession:

"Mr. Seldon! How do you do."

He was a tall man, with a handsome, clever face, which nevertheless struck Margery as not being exactly pleasant. The mouth was hidden by a falling moustache; but the expression of the rather hard grey eyes was cynical, and ever mocking. His attitude as he stood there was very easy and graceful, and he looked like a man accustomed to command attention and respect.

"Are you staying in this neighbourhood?" he continued. "It is a long time since we met, Miss Humpherys, and I hope you will not drive away now without giving me some hope that our acquaintance may be renewed? I need not tell you how pleasant the remembrance of it has been to me——"

He paused, and Estelle said, with a slight smile, and a little deprecating movement of one of her hands:

"I live at Hackley, about eight miles away. If you are staying within reach, I shall be glad if you will call. It is Miss Humpherys no longer, Mr. Seldon—I am married."

"Married!" he echoed. "Married! Is it too late for me to offer my congratulations? And may I not know your name?"

"I am Mrs. Douglas Hollis," she answered. "Here is my card. Do come and see me if you can; society at Hackley

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is rather slow. I suppose you are only in the neighbourhood for a short time?"

He took the card she gave him, glanced at it, and then raised his eyes again to her face. The listlessness of her attitude and manner had gradually left her, and its presence and disappearance had both been marked by the keen eyes of the man before her.

"Yes," he answered, "I shall hope to see you again. I have heard something of Hackley. You must find it tiresome, I'm afraid."

"Tiresome!" she repeated, with a ring of amusement in her voice—and Margery felt as if the Estelle who spoke was a total stranger to her. "Tiresome! They are appalling. We go to-night to a dinner-party, the very thought of which makes me shudder. Oh, if you knew how they bore me!"

"Oh," he said, with another slight smile, "a country dinner-party! Well, Mrs. Hollis, I can only hope it may turn out better than you expect. But I am keeping you. I will wish you good-bye now, in the hope that it may not be so long before we meet again. Au revoir!" He shook the hand she held out to him again, lifted his hat, and walked quickly away along the road.

"Who is it, Estelle?" asked Margery, as he disappeared.

Estelle had sat quite still, watching the receding figure, and, as Margery spoke, she started as if she had forgotten her presence. The colour faded from her cheeks, her manner changed from its bright attention to its ordinary passivity, and she answered in her usual uninterested tone:

"He is a man I knew some years ago—a Mr. Seldon. I had lost sight of him."

There was a short silence, and then Margery said:

"I had no idea you minded the dinner-party really so much, Estelle. I am so sorry."

"Mind it!" said Estelle; and for the first time Margery heard her calm, beautiful voice sharpened by irritability. "Of course I mind it, and now I mind it more. I had begun to forget the people among whom I used to live."

There was no answer. Margery did not understand why it should hurt her so much that Estelle should speak like that; but at the moment she felt it impossible to reply. They drove home almost in silence, and all the rest of the day she tried to persuade herself that it was only to her fancy that Estelle was different in manner—restless, irritable, absolutely discontented.

The sense of weariness produced in her by this new element of discord, to which she tried in vain to blind herself, so wore on Margery's spirits that, by the time she followed Estelle into Mrs. Camden's drawing-room in the evening, her anticipations were as gloomy as it was possible for them to be. Her first view of the stiff, formal drawing-room, and its equally unprepossessing inmates, did not tend to reassure her; nor did the first few moments during which she was wholly occupied with solemn introductions.

When these were over, and the silence of the shy young man who was to take her in to dinner allowed her a moment's breathing space, she stole a glance at her fellow sufferers. Douglas was standing beside a portly and imposing country magnate, looking decidedly rueful. Estelle was listening to the pompous platitudes of her host, the disdainful calm of her lovely face still disturbed by that new look of active discontent. But even as Margery looked at her, her expression changed suddenly and completely. A soft pink colour flushed into her cheeks, a look of glad surprise sprang into her eyes, her whole face seemed to wake up.

For a moment Margery could see nothing to account for such a change; then, to her inexpressible surprise, she saw the man who had spoken to her on Offley Moor advancing with Mrs. Camden to Estelle's side.

"Mrs. Hollis," Mrs. Camden said, "may I introduce your nearest neighbour—like yourself, a new comer—Mr. Bazerley?"

For a moment, Margery thought she must have been mistaken. Estelle had called him Mr. Seldon. Then she heard her say in the same awakened voice that she had heard for the first time that morning:

"What is the meaning of this, Mr. Seldon? Why do you spring mines on one in this way? Explain yourself, if you please."

"Willingly, and most easily," he answered. "I have inherited a little property, and a new name with it. As Mrs. Camden has told you, I am now Stephen Bazerley of Garden Cottage, and your nearest neighbour. May I hope that you will not think the worse of Hackley society on that account?"

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 35.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XXV. A FORLORN HOPE.

WHAT a morning to have longed for! Cold, damp, and misty, the fog found its way into the house, and caused Maud to peer over Kitty's ears as anxiously as if death waited upon the mare's every step towards the railway-station.

It was the same all along the line. Bare, dripping trees, swampy fields, oxen coated with mud; only the brooks and rivers seemed to be having a good time of it.

In London things were still worse, and it was only after numerous hair-breadth escapes, and by dint of paying a high premium to the cabman, that Brownie found herself at last outside the door of Number Twelve, Rochester Street, Strand.

She rang the bell, waited, rang again, and at last heard shuffling steps coming towards the door.

"Is Mr. Northcott at home?" she asked, nervously, while a very untidy-looking girl stared open-eyed and open-mouthed.

"Mrs. Norton?" said this maiden, who seemed to have lost her wits in the fog.

"Mr. Northcott," repeated Brownie, with emphasis; "I want to see him alone, if you please."

She was bidden to walk up to the "second-floor front;" a fair-sized room, sparsely and shabbily furnished, with the breakfast things still on the table. One side of the room was formed by folding-doors, which stood partly open.

Clement rose to meet her.

"I wish I had not been foolish enough to write," he began. "Don't think me a brute, Brownie; but why will you not leave me to go my own way alone?"

If only she could have left him alone! She would have scarcely wished for anything better. Before replying, Brownie cast her eyes round the room in search of some trace of his companion; a hat, a jacket, a pair of small slippers—anything.

But no such tell-tale object was to be detected; moreover, the table was only laid for one. Just as she brought her eyes to meet those of Clement again, she heard footsteps behind the folding-doors; and, rising abruptly, he went to close them.

"I did not think you would break the promise you gave me, Clement," she said, looking at him reproachfully.

"I promised I would not enlist until after the fifth," he answered. "I have not enlisted. To-day is the fourth, and I am still free."

"Free!" she exclaimed, bitterly; wishing to Heaven he had enlisted.

"Brownie," he said, "you have not come to London on purpose to reproach me, have you?"

"No, not to reproach you," she answered. "I have come to beg one last favour from you. I want you to return with me to Middleton; to stay there until Saturday morning. After that, I will not seek to hinder you any more; for me, you may go wherever you choose."

There was a change in Brownie; but Clement tried in vain to discover what it was. Her manner had gained in dignity what it had lost in tenderness.

"You ask too much," he said. "You do not know what your request means. No; I have made the wrench, I cannot go through it all again."

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He spoke so determinedly, that her heart sank. And where was her dignity now?

"Clement, you must come; you ought to come. You do not know how I have prayed and planned for your good. My prayers are answered; my plans will be successful, if only you will come. I never meant to speak like this to you. I think—I think it is the hardest task I have had yet. For five months—it has seemed an age—I have lived only to serve you. I never intended to ask for any return; but is it generous to deny just this one request?"

Clement's eyes were wet with tears.

"Very well," he answered, turning his back upon her to hide their traces, "I must come, I suppose. Of course I can't refuse when you put it like that."

She thanked him as though it were some great favour he had granted her, and then she became embarrassed. While she did not fear that he would disappoint her now, yet she dreaded the possible effect of Mrs. Oliver's influence. Brownie wished to keep Clement by her side until the time came for the journey; but it was plain she ought not to remain where she was. Now, whereas Clement, ever since her arrival, had looked as lugubrious as a man could look, by this time his face was lighted by its former cheerfulness.

"I say, Brownie," he exclaimed, with a lightness which struck her as revolting, "I shan't offer to take you to see anything; but you must want a meal. Look here, it is in your power to perform an act of real charity. I have agreed to place myself on your hands until Saturday; now suppose you trust yourself to me just for a few hours in return. We need not get back to Middleton until dinner-time. So there are several hours before us yet."

"What do you wish me to do?" she asked, astonished that even Clement, careless as she knew him to be, could think of anything but the impending crisis in his fortunes.

"I want you to see Mrs. Oliver——"

She was able to bear a great deal for him—had she not already borne a great deal?—but this was too much. Clement must actually lack a moral sense altogether to try to force such an indignity upon her.

"You insult me!" she cried, rising from her chair, and taking a step towards the door.

"No, no; it is no insult, Brownie. You do not know Mrs. Oliver—nor her husband. If you did, you would pity rather than blame her. Don't see her if you would rather not. She is in a position to be condemned by every one; in leaving her husband's house, she has committed what the world will call a sin. One kind word from a member of her own sex would be invaluable just now. It is for you to decide whether you will speak it."

In common with most of us, Brownie had been taught to love her enemies, to help those who despitefully used her. Heaven knew that Mrs. Oliver was her enemy. This woman had come between her and her heart's desire; but yet, when she heard Clement's words, she was inclined to relent. Not to forgive Mrs. Oliver; that was impossible. But, in Brownie's present overwrought condition of body and mind, she was liable to be easily carried away; at all times a creature of impulse, she was now doubly impulsive.

It seemed that, for the time being, she was exalted above the ordinary conventionalities which cramp our souls, and, for a little while, she forgot the existence of self.

"I will see her, Clement."

"That is more like you, Brownie. Now, sit down for a moment or two. I won't keep you long."

Then, when she was alone, she repented herself, and her mind was filled with one great dread lest Clement should be present at the interview between herself and Mrs. Oliver.

The minute or two became a minute or ten. What should she say to Mrs. Oliver? Clement had spoken as though she needed consolation; but this could hardly be the case. It must be countenance, rather than consolation, that Mrs. Oliver desired, and Brownie could not afford her that.

Hearing footsteps approaching the door, she pressed her hands tightly against her throbbing head. She laughed bitterly. Was she expected to wish Mrs. Oliver joy?

Clement was whistling an air from the "Mikado." To Brownie there seemed something almost fiendish in his lightheartedness.

The handle turned; he flung the door back just in his old, careless way. She felt as though she would faint; but not for the world would she betray such weakness before Mrs. Oliver. Nevertheless she was obliged to close her eyes for just one moment.

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Upon opening them, she beheld Clement standing there, his hat on the back of his head, buttoning his glove as he finished his tune.

"Come along, Brownie. To-day we live, to-morrow we die, and ever after we're buried. A pity it isn't always to-day! I will tell you what we are going to do. Programme.—Item: Luncheon. What do you say to the 'Grand'?"

"But," she murmured—"Mrs. Oliver."

"All in good time," he continued; "pleasure first, business afterwards. That has always been my motto, I'm afraid. I'll take you to her after you have had something to eat."

At that moment Brownie saw the heavens open. The vision was too dazzling, and she did actually shrink backwards. Imagine what it meant to her—Mrs. Oliver was not with Clement!

She did not yet understand it all. But this she knew—that a miracle had been performed, and that, just as the blinding, darkening fog had cleared away since her arrival in Rochester Street, so also was the shadow removed from her life.

"You will take me to her!" she began, before the full meaning of his words dawned upon her.

"To be sure; after——"

Then his eyes met hers. These two understood one another easily, in spite of their many misunderstandings; he stopped short, and an expression of the deepest reproach passed over his face.

"Great Heaven! what a villain you must think me, Brownie!"

Her body was shaken by her sobs, her head was bowed to her knees; her tears fell fast.

"There, don't trouble yourself," he said, sorry for her sorrow. "It is all in the day's work. After all, what are the odds? Nothing can make any difference."

This was a matter of opinion.

"Will you tell me all about it?" she asked, presently, "or—or is it impossible to forgive me, Clement?"

"There is not much to tell," he explained. "It was impossible for me to stay at Middleton. There is no need to go into that again. But Captain Oliver held a couple of bills of mine, and he had been pressing me for the money before my accident. I had a little cash, but not enough, so I couldn't very well go away without seeing him. When I reached The Nook I at once saw that something was up. I insisted upon an interview with Mrs. Oliver. She was packing her trunks, and I knew quite enough to guess the rest. I taxed her. I told her I knew she was going away with that villain Litten. She made a clean breast of it. He had told her that he must be at Eastwood on the fifth, to get some money. On the strength of this money they intended to make a bolt of it. But the row on Tuesday night brought matters to a crisis. Well, there was no time to lose. Litton was due in an hour. I told her she should not step out of the frying-pan into the fire in that way. I vowed I would stay till he came, and leave him without a whole bone in his body. At last she gave way, and, to make sure she should not change her mind, I brought her away there and then, depositing her at her mother's house in Gower Street. That is where I wanted to take you, Brownie. So we may as well make a start."

Upon hearing this explanation, Brownie was inclined to praise Clement as extravagantly as she had lately blamed him. For, that she should have done him wrong, seemed beyond the course of nature.

She longed to tell him of Anderson's engagement to Maud; but, under the circumstances, it appeared too much like an invitation to declare the love which she now knew that he felt for her; and after a little hesitation she followed him from the house, with her important secret still untold.

They lunched at the Grand Hotel, then drove to Gower Street, where she saw Mrs. Oliver; and ultimately reached Middleton at seven o'clock.

"You understand that you are to be at Eastwood at eight o'clock, punctually, to-morrow evening, Clement," said Brownie, as they strolled homewards, not very quickly.

"But," he expostulated, "suppose you are unsuccessful after all, Brownie, where shall I be then?"

"I shall not be unsuccessful," she protested for the twentieth time. "You may sleep happily to-night, Clement; it is the last night of your banishment. To-morrow will begin a new life for us."

He shook his head dismally, and they soon reached the gates leading to the house.

"You must come right to the door," she insisted; and, anxious only to be with her as long as possible, he waited until it was opened.

"Good night, Brownie," he said, "I

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little thought to wish it you in person when I got up this morning."

She hesitated, with her little hand still lying in his. Then suddenly she withdrew it, and darted a look towards the door, which stood wide open.

"There is one small piece of news I have not told you, Clement; Mr. Anderson——" he struck his boot against the pavement; he did not bless Anderson. "Mr. Anderson," she continued, with another hasty glance towards the open door, "Mr. Anderson is engaged to Maud."

Clement was so taken aback that it was a moment or two before he could express his surprise in articulate language; and when he at length recovered the power of speech, there was no one to listen to him.

Brownie had disappeared; the door was shut, and, as he speedily ascertained, securely locked.

Her words had given the lie to his firmest convictions, and their first effect was to fill him with gladness. But presently, as he made his way to the "Black Bull," to seek a lodging for the night, gladness gave place to a sorrow that was deep in proportion. For never, while this stigma rested upon his name, could he make Brownie his wife; and although he had consented to be at Eastwood at eight o'clock on the following evening, he had done so only to gratify her, and without the least particle of hope that the visit could bring him anything but further annoyance and degradation.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

VANISHING TYPES.*

No visitor to the country is likely to get through his holiday, nowadays, without hearing plenty of discourse concerning the evil case in which the British farmer at present finds himself; especially if, like me, he should have many old friends engaged in the struggle to make head against the perversity of the clerk of the weather, and the persistent fertility of those distant regions, which were formerly little more than vague geographical expressions, but have now been brought almost next door to us.

Disaster has, indeed, fallen thick and fast on that class whose position seemed formerly—at least, to outsiders—to be almost an ideal one; and change has come with rapid steps. Types are constantly vanishing and constantly emerging. It is part of the scheme of Nature that they should, just as much a matter of course as the growth of grass in the spring and the fall of leaves in autumn.

Samuel Dingley passes out of sight and into oblivion by the gradual operation of social forces; but the crisis of the last ten or fifteen years, which his employers have had to face, has been something quite out of the ordinary course. Change has hurried on, like the raging flood of a broken dam, and, in many districts, the old type of the English farmer has been suddenly and ruthlessly swept away. He has gone under the flood, and new men with new ideas have risen in his place.

It is generally admitted, I believe, that the agriculture of the leading English counties is the first in the world; but even in the most advanced districts, the primary occupation of civilised man and the mother of the arts has been followed in very leisurely fashion compared with the strenuous application with which men have thrown themselves into other industrial callings.

The wisdom of the father usually was found amply sufficient for the purposes of the son; the latter not feeling any uncomfortable curiosity to search for fresh methods which should make the earth yield a fuller increase.

The enormous revolution wrought in manufacturing industries by the discovery of steam, affected agriculture very little at first. The steam-engine threshed out the corn-stacks in the place of the horse-power machine. At this point, steam halted for a long time. It took many years to bring the steam-plough to anything like a practical machine, and, even now, the area of land worked by these uncouth-looking monsters is infinitesimal. The power of steam was enlisted to forge anchors and make pins; to weave cloth and rip gigantic logs of timber into strips of ten to the inch; but the farmer went placidly along with his archaic ploughs and harrows.

The scheming and striving of the craftsman called into existence those gigantic midland and northern towns, and ten times more beef, and bread, and beer were needed; so prices went up, and, though the times were always bad, the farmer managed to live better than his fathers had lived. He did not save much money, because, like everybody else, he had found

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* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Volume I., Third Series, page 606.

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out how this and that—which his grandfather would have regarded as utter luxuries, or, more likely, would never have dreamt of at all—were necessities of life.

The illimitable prairies of the West, the sun-baked plains of India, had not begun to pour forth wheat in inexhaustible supply; nor had those fateful steamships, with their freezing-chambers, been planned to bring New Zealand mutton fresh through the tropics to English markets.

It was a melancholy experience—almost as tragical as the calling over the roll of a regiment after a bloody battle—when, one evening over our tobacco, I made enquiries of the friend, whose guest I was, as to who was now the tenant of this or that farm; and what had happened to this or that farmer who had succumbed to ill-fortune, and was no longer seen at Shillingbury Market. Very few farms there were which had not changed hands since I had bird's-nested along the hedgerows, or fished for eels in the meadow ditches; and the men who now occupied them were of a totally different type. My old friend and playfellow, Arthur Suttaby, still muddled along, farming what passed as his own land; but it was an open secret that the Martlebury Bank had a heavy mortgage on the place, and that Mr. Suttaby might find it very inconvenient if Joshua Gay should press for a settlement of that cross account of his for cattle sold, and hay and turnips bought. There was Thurgarsby, too, the largest farm in the district, where the Winwoods had been settled as tenants of Barabbas College, Cambridge, for several generations. Old Mr. Winwood I can just remember, a jolly, red-faced old gentleman, who always dressed in a blue coat with bright buttons, and drab breeches and gaiters and top-boots. George Winwood, his son, came after him, a tall, silent, reserved man, credited by his neighbours with overweening pride, and a desire to get made a magistrate and dine with the clergy. By way of a beginning he dropped all his father's old friends—a step which did not tend to make him popular—and some of the new friends he picked up, as the sequel will show, were not profitable ones. The old friends were rather unreasonable. They abused George Winwood because he dropped them, showing by this that they would have been glad of his company, and then changed their tone and abused him as a good-for-nothing stuck-up puppy, who would certainly end his days in a workhouse.

This prophecy I hope may never be fulfilled. I found, however, that George Winwood was no longer master of Thurgarsby. After his marriage the nursery had filled rapidly; and there had not been that corresponding depletion of the stables which prudence calls for in such cases. George hunted a good deal; hunted in pink, and the correctest form generally, just like the officers who brought their horses over by railway from Martlebury, and not semi-professionally, as so many farmers did, with the view of selling the promising young hunter they might be riding. He picked up several acquaintances in the hunting-field; amongst others, that of Captain Absolon, a gentleman who had left the army for the more lucrative, if less dignified, calling of agent to the Marquis of Folkshire. Captain Absolon was very keen on the subject of horse-breeding, and explained to Winwood how a man in his position, with such a grand range of pasture, might take it up, and get from his capital thus invested a return at least three times as great as from the old stick-in-the-mud system of sheep and cattle grazing. Talking to George Winwood on such a subject was simply preaching to the converted. Horses were his passion; and, after a little, these desultory conversations led up to a definite plan for a sort of informal partnership between the two in the new venture. Captain Absolon seemed the very man for the job, for he had a friend through whose hands all the pick of the blood-stock of England passed; and George Winwood was tremblingly anxious to set the scheme going, lest any one else should snap up the Captain as a partner. Mrs. Winwood, a vain, silly little woman, so delicate that she was forced to spend most of her time on a sofa reading novels, was equally keen; for, once intimately associated with Captain Absolon, they might hope to realise their ambition, and visit with the best. One day, after a lunch which had been served in the finest style, and in its details bore not the slightest resemblance to the early dinner it really was, the bargain was finally ratified; and soon afterwards the Captain's friend sent in some brood-mares, the pick of the pick of England, at prices which certainly made poor George open his eyes very wide indeed; but the Captain assured him that, in a venture of this sort, the only safe plan was to buy the very best stock you could lay your hands on. He had had a large experience in such

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matters, and ought to know. So George drew the cheques with hope in his breast, and sat down to wait for the three and fourfold interest which had been promised by his coadjutor.

In course of time there was a yard full of young horses, and then began the task of turning these into money. This, as every one knows who has had anything to do with the transfer of the noble animal in question, is an operation of great delicacy, and the margin between buying and selling is a very big one, bigger by far than it is in the case of mining shares or blue china. Somehow, too, there seemed to be a dragging trade in horse-flesh, just as Winwood wanted to realise. Captain Absolon said he would get hold of some of the right sort of buyers, and bring them over. "You know, Winwood," he said, "it's always best to put these chaps into a good humour before you begin to talk about business; so, if I were you, I'd have a nice little lunch for 'em, and a bottle or two of fizz."

These buyers of the right sort were always ready to lunch; but they did not always do business. The nice little luncheons were not given for nothing, and the search for a market for his stock often took Winwood away from Thurgarsby, and business on the farm at home did not go on any the better for these spells of absence. It is to be feared that, with all such incidental expenses as these entered in the cost of production, the horse-breeding account did not show the profits predicted. One buyer of the right sort left behind him, in payment for the two best colts of the year, a worthless cheque, and got clean off to America with his plunder. Then it was that George first discovered how much better it would have been to have had drawn up a regular deed of partnership between himself and Captain Absolon, for the latter repudiated all liability for the mishap, and made merry over George's simplicity in taking payment in any other form than gold or notes. This led to a temporary coolness, and Winwood more than once swore that he would have done with horse-breeding, and with Captain Absolon as well. But this resolution was easier sworn to than carried out, for there were certain transactions, on stamped paper, the settlement of which would have proved very inconvenient to poor Winwood if his account with Captain Absolon had to be adjusted.

So a truce was patched up, and, in the course of the following year, a nephew of the Captain's, a young man from London, named Lewis, came to Thurgarsby as a farming pupil. He was supposed to pay very handsomely for the very good entertainment he received; but, however good the honorarium might have been, it was not good enough to enable George Winwood to keep his head above water. The horse-breeding business and the stamped paper transactions had hit him hard, and the bad harvests and the fall in prices gave him the "coup de grâce." At fifty-five years of age, with an invalid wife, and seven children—not one of them earning a penny, or able to do so—he resigned his lease to Mr. Lewis, and retired to a little house in a back street in Martlebury on the wreck of his fortune, which yielded him at most a hundred and fifty pounds a year.

And Harry Larkison, whose old white pony I used to borrow often during my holidays, had also gone under in the struggle. Eddlestone, Harry's pretty farmhouse, I found in the occupation of Mr. Lewis's farm-bailiff; for Mr. Lewis seemed to have money enough to take any number of farms; and, provided that he could get them on his own terms, he did not seem to be terrified by the fate promised to those who add field to field, and house to house. Harry Larkison and George Winwood differed widely. There was no pride about Harry, no desire to rub shoulders with the gentry. His father had begun life as an agricultural labourer, rose to be a farm-bailiff, and in this office he became rich as his master grew poor, an occurrence by no means uncommon in the days in question.

On his master's death he gave up service and lived at Eddlestone Farm, which then chanced to be vacant; but Harry, as long as his father lived, did not profit much from this rise in the family fortunes, for the old man, a saturnine old miser, kept the boy hard at work, and got more labour out of him than out of any other hand on the farm; and it was not his fault that the young fellow did not sink into the conventional bucolic lout. But a fit soon carried him off, and then Harry bade farewell to the plough-tail, turned a cowshed into a riding-horse stable, bought a smart nag and a leash of greyhounds, and set to work to enjoy himself in proper style.

On a market-day no young farmer came into Shillingbury so neat or so smartly dressed as Harry. He was a good-looking

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fellow, with a frank, open, merry face; light, curly hair; and a voice, the very sound of which would make even a hypochondriac feel better. Though his farm was a small one, Harry found it necessary to attend three markets a week, and, in the winter, every coursing party and every meet of the East Fallowshire hounds within distance.

The consequence of this altered system was that the labour bill at Eddlestone increased rapidly to something like double the figure it stood at in the old man's time. The house was situated close to the main road, between Shillingbury and Martlebury, and it was wonderful what a number of people would give Harry a call in passing; most of them, I honestly believe, because they wished to see him and have half an hour's chat with him, and with only a secondary interest in that brown sherry, or bottled ale, or cherry brandy which he never failed to bring out.

Through the sixties Harry managed to rub along fairly well. He was not in the way to make his fortune; but this fact did not trouble him. Then came the agitation in the labour market, when Hodge showed that he had learnt the trick of the strike and meant to use it as well as Jack the grinder and Dick the weaver. Harry was one of the best masters in the district; but this did not help him. His farm was selected for a trial strike, and his labourers were ordered to turn out just as the corn was ripe for the harvest. They demanded extra wages, though the crop was a light one, and Harry, who was as obstinate as a mule, swore that he would see them all in Hanover first. They did not go to Hanover, but hung about the lanes, intimidating the scratch company of odd hands Harry had got together to make an ineffectual sort of beginning of harvest. At last the strikers gave in and went to work on their master's terms; but ten days of golden weather had been lost, and more than half the crop lay ungathered in the fields during a drenching September.

This was the first stroke; others fell in rapid succession, and Harry was forced to follow his high-headed neighbour, at Thurgarsby, into retirement. Some old people of the village, who called to mind the questionable methods by which old Ben Larkison had gathered together his substance, fell to moralising, and said it was just what they had always expected, and that, after all, there was some truth in the saying, "Badly got, badly go;" but to the more practical mind, it seemed that if it had not been for Joseph Arch, and American wheat, and New Zealand mutton, poor Harry might have, perhaps, jogged on in his light-hearted, happy-go-lucky way, in spite of the original taint hanging to the paternal guineas.

Harry Larkison did not retire to the dreary idleness of a life in a dull country town. Had he done so, I tremble to think what his fate would have been. I fear he would have consumed his time and his substance, and ruined his health, tippling with cattle-dealers and farmers of the meaner sort, and trying to make believe that he was still one of them with horses and acres of his own. Fortune did him a good turn at last. It happened, just after he was forced to leave his farm, that the district surveyor of the highways decamped, carrying away with him a handsome sum out of the rates; and it occurred to the local authority that here was an excellent opportunity of keeping the wolf from the humble door of Harry's new dwelling. It is to be feared that the committee of selection did not canvass very narrowly his qualifications for the post. Harry understood about as much of the theory and practice of road-making as he did of orchid-growing, and was quite as well fitted to audit the books of the Midland Railway, as he was to keep in order the rather complicated road-accounts of some two-and-thirty parishes; but he was such a good fellow, and everybody was so sorry for him, and, at least, he might be trusted not to make free with the public purse, as the last man had done; so he was elected to the post by an overwhelming majority, against several candidates with testimonials crediting them with skill sufficient to keep in order the Simplon Pass, or any other such roadway. The roads about Shillingbury were never first-rate, and I can conscientiously say, from recent personal experience, that, under Harry's management, they are no worse than they formerly were. No doubt Harry's election was a job of the deepest dye; but if there is to be hereafter any forgiveness for those who perpetrate jobs, I pray that such forgiveness may be extended to that wrong-headed local authority which made Harry Larkison a district surveyor of highways.

The knell of the kindly, sauntering, happy-go-lucky system of farming, with which the present generation of country-born Englishmen are so familiar, has

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sounded. Taken as a class, the men of the past are fitted neither by temperament nor training to adopt those new methods which must be taken up if England is yet to "laugh with a harvest;" if future generations of Englishmen are to rear their muscle on home nutriment, and not on American beef and German beer. The contempt of the farmer of the old school for theoretical agriculture was something too deep for words. To him the contention that a man might learn anything about farming out of a book, was like holding out the reddest of rags to the most irate of bulls; and I can now fancy I can hear his pishing and pshawing anent the younger men, who were trying to understand something about plant-nourishment, or laying out experimental plots for ascertaining the comparative merits of various kinds of manure. The manufacturer has always been on the look-out for processes to economise cost of production, and to increase the yield; but, somehow, the farmer has always regarded the men who have devoted their time and money to experiment as meddlesome know-nothings, or even as foes in disguise. But all this is rapidly changing, and the change must still go on. In a vast majority of cases the new order of things can only be initiated by new men, but here and there sharp-sighted, clever men have already realised the situation, and have not been afraid of spending money to convert their farms into meal and corn manufactories; and such as these have had their reward. They are the pioneers of the new agriculture; and they and others like them will in the future control the cultivation of our island; that is if the laws of economy are to be consulted in agriculture as in manufactures. When Lancashire cottons and Yorkshire cloths are again produced by hand-looms, then we may expect to get the fruits of the earth cheaper and more abundant from that system of small holdings which is now in high favour as a cure for all the evils of the State with certain social and economic informers, many of whom would be puzzled to tell the difference between wheat and barley.

GWEN'S PRINCE CHARMING.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Gwendolen!"

Mrs. John Walters spoke with considerable emphasis; but without producing any visible effect on the smiling face which Gwendolen turned to her from the window.

"And why ought I to be ashamed of myself, Sylvia?" she replied, good-humouredly. "When a person is very much bored in dull London lodgings, may not that person take her painting to the window and make a study of the bricks and mortar on the opposite side of the street? I assure you, Sylvia, that, when it is finished—if it ever is finished—it will be a most original thing in studies."

"I tell you, Gwen," repeated Mrs. Walters—ignoring the explanation—"that you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You know you don't care a bit to make a study of bricks and mortar any more than I do myself. You only want a real good excuse for standing there the whole morning and looking across the street at the opposite house."

"I confess," replied Gwen, with the same imperturbable smile, "that you have fathomed my motive; but I am not in the least ashamed of myself. You see, unless I were to dress up as a housemaid, I could not stand at the window for more than a quarter of an hour without some respectable pretence. I think the ingenuity of mine reflects credit on my inventive powers; and I don't really see," she resumed after a pause, "why you should try to lecture me because I am interested in a handsome Prince Charming who lives over the way. A couple of years ago, before you married, I guess you would have been capable of something quite as reprehensible. You were nineteen then, and I am barely twenty now. If you flirted, as you know you did——"

"That is neither here nor there, Gwen," interrupted Mrs. Walters, with slightly heightened colour. "I may have done silly things in my time; but there was always some one to keep me in order. I am not so particular with you as mother and Aunt Lucy were with me."

"Mother and Aunt Lucy!" echoed Gwen, contemptuously. "You don't mean to say you are going to take on the tone of a middle-aged woman? I wouldn't be middle-aged just yet, if I were you. I thought at first, when I told you about Prince Charming across the street, and how eagerly he watched us once or twice, that you were going to be quite as much amused by it as I am; when suddenly, for

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some inexplicable reason, you draw in your horns, and have a violent attack of propriety."

"Gwendolen," said Mrs. Walters, "you know quite well I did not encourage you. You know I have scarcely seen the man."

"Well, you had better come to the window and look at him now," said Gwen, with the same unruffled equanimity. "He is at the window for the twentieth time, I should think. Oh, dear"—and Gwen sighed — "to think that we are only separated by a few yards of street! How wide is a street, Sylvia? I haven't a notion. What a pity there is no mutual friend who could bridge it over by an introduction!"

"Gwen," said Sylvia, making a sudden attempt to turn the conversation, "don't you think to-day we might go and buy those things I want for the drawing-room? We have scarcely done any shopping yet."

"Shopping!" ejaculated Gwen; "shopping has no interest left for me. What is the use of going to Liberty's and choosing pretty things for a drawing-room in an out-of-the-way Cornish village, where no one knows one fashion from another? It is perfectly preposterous."

And Gwendolen heaved another sigh.

"Poor Gwen!" said Sylvia, looking at her sister with affectionate concern. "I'm afraid your life is rather a dull one just at present."

"You're afraid!" re-echoed Gwen. "Indeed, there is no doubt at all upon the subject. Nevertheless, I am not the person to be pitied most. I'm not absolutely obliged to live year out year in at Saint Pinnock, nor to come to these dull London lodgings. My lord and master is a dream of the future, a castle in the air, a lay figure on which to hang all my ideals; not a grizzly-bearded personage, who buries you and himself at the remotest corner of No-man's-land, and who only comes to town to burrow in the library of the British Museum. No, you needn't call me 'poor Gwen!' it would be more to the purpose if you called yourself 'poor Sylvia!'"

"Really, Gwendolen——" began Mrs. Walters; but her expostulation was nipped in the bud.

"Don't interrupt me," continued Gwen. "I have opened my lips now for the first time on this subject, and I mean to say one or two things before I close them. I want to ask you a plain, straightforward question. Why did you marry Mr. Walters?"

"I married him," replied Sylvia, with a ring of defiance in her voice, "because he asked me to do so."

"And that," replied Gwendolen, "is not a reason worth giving. If any one had told me two years ago that Mr. Walters was going to ask you to marry him, I should have imagined you dropping him a curtsey, and refusing him in these words: 'Honoured sir, a woman, not to say a girl of nineteen, may not marry her grandfather, besides which, the chances of family jars will be much increased if I accept an offer from my aunt's brother-in-law. Oh, Sylvia!" and here Gwen sighed once more. "I think you made a mistake. It has always seemed to me that you were not quite yourself when you accepted Mr. Walters. You might as well confess to your only sister that you consider you were a little over hasty."

"Gwen!" cried Sylvia, angrily, "how dare you! Why should I regret what I did? You often say that you never saw any one so kind to his wife as Mr. Walters is to me. I only hope you may be as fortunate yourself when you realise your ideal. Moreover, mother approved of what I did. You know it was her great comfort on her deathbed to feel that I was provided for, and that my husband's house could be your home."

"That is begging the question," rejoined Sylvia, obstinately. "I am not referring to Mr. Walters's conduct since your marriage, but to your own before it. I merely want to hear the story of how, and why, you fell in love with your husband. His learning and his peaceful disposition are his most striking qualities, and you were not the girl to be fascinated by either one or the other."

"Love is not a matter of hard-and-fast rules," replied Sylvia. "People may fall in love without knowing why."

"I don't think so. There must be some attraction. If I could see any for myself I should not ask you. For instance, if I bestowed my affections on our opposite neighbour, the reason would be self-evident. I should need no justification."

"Shouldn't you? Well, I should think a young woman who handed her heart out of the window to a young man with whom she has never exchanged a word, would need a good deal of justification."

"Nay," said Gwen, smiling, "it would

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just be love at first sight. Now let us suppose, for a moment, that Mr. Walters was like Prince Charming."

"I shall not suppose anything of the sort," interrupted Mrs. Walters, with an angry flash. "Nor will I hear any more of this kind of talk. It is utterly purposeless, and shows very little consideration for my feelings."

"I'm sorry," said Gwen, penitently, "if I have vexed you. It never seemed to me as if you could care what one said; but I will say no more about Mr. Walters, anyway. But there is one thing which I did want to say about Prince Charming—how I wish I knew his real name!—which is that I am sure I have seen him before. Does he strike you in the same light?"

But Sylvia shook her head.

"I've barely seen him now," she said, bending over her work. "I caught sight of a smart young man; but their name is legion, and they are all much alike."

"I beg your pardon, Sylvia; but you are very much mistaken if you think our opposite neighbour is just a stereotyped young man of fashion. If you haven't seen him before, I'm sure I have—only seen him, you know; not made his acquaintance. I must try to remember where. We went knocking about so much in the old days that it is difficult to recall such things."

"Gwendolen," answered Mrs. Walters, trying to make her fair young face as severely matronly as she felt she ought to make it, "I must beg of you to talk no more of the young man who lives opposite. I tell you I will not countenance your trying to get up a flirtation across the street. I am seriously in earnest about it. If Mr. Walters knew he would be extremely annoyed."

"Would he?" cried Gwen, demurely. "Well, if you tell him, mind you mention the fact that Prince Charming's demonstrations have not gone beyond the limits of curiosity. He hasn't done anything to which the primmest of people could raise an objection. He is merely almost a fixture at his window."

And then Miss Gwendolen Rivers went back to her easel, and Mrs. Walters then began to look deeply engrossed in the shading of her embroidery silks; but it was a long time before she could decide whether she was looking at terra-cotta or cardinal red. Perhaps Gwen monopolised too much of the scant allowance of London daylight.

"Sylvia," said Gwen that night, as they went to their rooms, "just come in here for a moment. I've thought it all out about Prince Charming. I've been puzzling over it all the evening. Didn't you notice how quiet I was? Now don't look impatient; you must listen. It's quite interesting, and there is nothing to scold me for."

"Well, Gwen, to speak frankly, I am quite tired of this romancing about our opposite neighbour. You talk of nothing else."

"There's nothing else half so interesting to talk of," retorted saucy Gwen. "You pretend to be bored just to tease me. But you will just listen to this. Do you remember going to Boulogne with mother? Let me see; it was two years ago last June. I was at school at Miss Parkinson's, and I was so jealous of your having such a nice jaunt. Then mother wrote to say that Boulogne didn't agree with you at all, and that you were going with Aunt Lucy down into Cornwall, and that I could come to be with her instead of you. I thought it was awful fun, though it seemed a pity you had knocked up, and couldn't stay on and have your share of it. That was when and where I saw Prince Charming; he was staying at Boulogne, too, and we used to see him at the Établissement. He was not quite so handsome then as he is now; but I took the greatest interest in him. I even have remembered his name. It is Harvey Ferrier. We did not know him. Mother had one of her prejudices against him, so you would not have known him either; but perhaps you noticed him somewhere about. Do you remember?"

"I really can't tell you; perhaps I did."

"No wonder you can't recollect," laughed Gwendolen, "considering you went straight off to Saint Pinnock, and bewitched that confirmed old bachelor, Mr. Walters. I think, myself, it would have been more romantic to have stayed on at Boulogne and have bewitched Prince Charming."

Mrs. Walters suppressed a yawn, and then got up from the easy-chair.

"So now you are satisfied," she said, kissing her sister. "Good night; I am going to bed."

"Good night, dear. You look very pale and tired. London doesn't suit you. Make haste and get to rest."

But when Sylvia had lain down she did not go to sleep. She buried her face in her pillow and cried quietly until the

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September dawn was struggling in through the chink of the shutters.

"Miss Rivers, sir? Yes, sir. She is staying with Mr. and Mrs. Walters—first-floor front. Shall I take up your card, sir?"

The name on the card was Harvey Ferrier, Southdownshire Regiment; and Prince Charming, who had handed it to the lodging-house boy in buttons, found himself following boy and card up the stairs to the first-floor front with a heart beating so loud and fast that he could not hear the sound of his own feet as he went. When the door of the drawing-room was opened, he found himself in the presence of a middle-aged man with a kind, grave face, looking out from under a shock of grizzled hair, and whose whole appearance formed the strongest contrast with that of his visitor.

Prince Charming looked a little puzzled. So did Mr. Walters. The name on the card suggested nothing at all to the man of letters. He bowed to his caller, and asked him to sit down.

"I beg your pardon, sir," began Prince Charming. "I took the liberty of sending up the card you hold to Miss Rivers."

Mr. Walters glanced again from the visitor to his card; but he still looked puzzled.

"Miss Rivers," he said, slowly, at last, "is staying here under my care. She is a very near connection of mine—in fact, Mr. Ferrier——"

"I see," broke in Mr. Ferrier, hurriedly —"I see. Of course, if that is the case, I must ask you to be so kind as to listen to me while I explain the reason of my visit. Perhaps it will be better that I should have seen you first, as I am aware I am doing something a little startling."

Mr. Walters bowed again. His manner was solemn, but not unkindly, and his visitor was far too sanguine to be easily repelled.

"I will not make any unnecessary preamble," said Prince Charming; "I am not clever at beating about the bush. It is just this. About two years ago, at Boulogne, where Miss Rivers was staying with her mother, I fell desperately in love with her——"

"Just when I fell in love with Sylvia," mused Mr. Walters; and he felt very sympathetic.

"I was horribly badly off," pursued Prince Charming, "so Lady Rivers thought I acted dishonourably in telling her daughter the state of my feelings. She was excessively angry, and I made a great fool of myself. The fact was, we were both so fond of one another, and so unhappy."

"Poor young things!" said Mr. Walters, feelingly; then, as he thought of light-hearted Gwendolen, he added: "But she has got over it wonderfully."

"Outwardly, perhaps," replied Prince Charming. "I thought myself, when I caught sight of her from the house opposite, where I am just now in rooms, that she looked much older, and more worn. But maybe the distance deceived me. However, I am sure she will not have forgotten. Look at me; you wouldn't think I have suffered serious heart troubles. Yet I have never left off thinking of her, and hoping for her."

"Really," said Mr. Walters, with a serious smile. "But if you could not afford to marry then, is it any use your thinking of renewing your courtship now?"

"Yes, sir, certainly," replied Ferrier, sturdily. "I am in a better position now; I have got out of all my difficulties; I've settled down into being the steadiest of men—all for love of her. I have a good appointment at Chatham. Lady Rivers could no longer refuse me on the grounds she formerly urged. I had, in spite of all my efforts, quite lost sight of Miss Rivers, until I saw her by chance here. May I beg of you to put me in communication with Lady Rivers at once?"

"Lady Rivers," answered Mr. Walters, "is dead. The young lady is now my ward; but in this matter I shall use no coercive authority. It will rest, no doubt greatly to your satisfaction, entirely with her to give you your answer."

Ferrier rose, trembling with unexpected delight, and held out his hand to the man who spoke such words of comfort.

"She is in the next room," went on Mr. Walters, kindly. "I will call her."

"No, no," interposed Prince Charming, hastily. "If you would kindly allow me to call her myself. She has seen me across the street. The surprise will not come upon her with too much of a shock."

"By all means," said Mr. Walters, obligingly. "Open the folding door, draw back the portière, and you will find her."

Meanwhile, he obligingly turned his back, and walked to the window, that he might not be in the way of this constant lover's welcome back to giddy-headed, good-hearted Gwendolen.

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Then Ferrier went to the door, and, opening it softly, called in a tone scarcely above a whisper:

"Sylvia! Sylvia!" There was a lady painting at an easel, but she did not answer. "Sylvia, darling, don't you see I have come back to you?"

This did not reach Mr. Walters' ears. But he did hear a bitter cry, as if of pain, and then a sound of stifled sobs; it was a strange greeting to pass between long-severed, still-hopeful lovers.

He stood patiently drumming on the window for a while, until he heard a hasty rush of feet across the landing and down the stairs. The heavy front door opened with a jerk and closed with a bang, and he saw his late visitor, with a pale, stricken face, hurry across the street and enter the house opposite. Then he thought the best thing he could do was to take his hat and go to the British Museum without disturbing the ladies.

"I'm so extremely sorry," he said that evening, at dinner, glancing from his wife, who had evidently been crying, to Gwen, who was quieter than usual, "I'm really very sorry that Gwen had not a kinder welcome to give to her old friend. He seemed to me a good sort of man, and I was much interested in what he told me of his love-story. He was so sure you would be glad to see him. Can't you think it over a little, Gwen, and give him a different answer to-morrow? I really liked him. I'd go and call on him with pleasure. Shall I, Gwen? Will you not let him come again, Gwen?"

"He didn't come for Gwen at all," sobbed out Sylvia, desperately. "I ought to have told you about it, only I didn't like to. Gwen wouldn't have thrown him over if she had made all the promises I did."

Mr. Walters looked again from Sylvia to Gwen, and from Gwen to Sylvia.

"How terribly sad!" he murmured. "Perhaps she regrets."

"Perhaps she does," said Gwen; "but it is a great deal worse for Prince Charming. Poor Prince Charming!"

PRESTON TOWER.

By the fertile Lothian Links,
Grey stands Preston Tower;
All around the massive hold,
Wheat fields flaunt their living gold;
Barley waves her gilded green,
Scarlet poppies flash between,
Purple clover calls the bees
Floating on the perfumed breeze;
While, in the shine and in the shower,
Stedfast stands old Preston Tower.

Far away the Pentland Hills
Watch old Preston Tower;
Mark their line against the sky
Where the shadows flit and fly;
Close below, the waves of Forth
Crisp and toss, as from the north
The wild winds come sweeping down
O'er King Arthur's guarded town;
Careless of their angry power,
Stedfast stands old Preston Tower.

So, in years long passed away,
Grey stood Preston Tower;
When in royal Holyrood
The clans around the Stuart stood,
When loud the maddening pibroch rang,
'Mid tramp of horse and broadsword clang,
While tartans waved and trumpets blew,
And hope was springing, ever new,
While bold Prince Charlie led his power
Gallantly by Preston Tower.

On the gay, triumphant march,
Looked old Preston Tower;
Heard the clangour of the fray
Die in victor shouts away;
Saw the Southrons' headlong flight
From the Stuart and his right;
Heard re-echoing free and far,
The loud acclaim of Scotland's war;
Saw the white rose flaunt her flower
Fearlessly by Preston Tower.

Oh the triumph, brief and bright!
Did old Preston Tower
Hear the wail of rout and loss,
Sounding from Dumrossie Moss?
Of Scotland's best to prison borne—
Her Prince a fugitive forlorn—
Her noblest blood on scaffold shed—
Her proudest, captive, lost, or dead?
Did old Scotland's darkest hour
Cast its gloom on Preston Tower?

Nay, the ramparts, firm and grey,
Of old Preston Tower,
Wall and buttress changeless stand,
Pride and beacon of the land;
Silent witness of her glories,
Silent record of her stories;
Of Border feats of Ker and Scott,
And many a hero, long forgot;
Supreme 'mid work of time and hour,
Stedfast stands old Preston Tower.

YACHTING IN STILL WATERS.

IN FIVE PARTS. PART V.

Harking back to Wych, the usual road to Corfe Castle lies straight across the heath, from the ferry, with the crumbling towers of the grand old ivy-clad castle crowning its smooth, green hill, full in view nearly every step of the way. Not a living soul will be seen when crossing the heath by the deep old rut track, bordered with short, fine turf, that was perhaps first cut by the lumbering wheels of Roman chariots. The face of the rolling heath is embroidered with deep lilac heather, whose firm interlacing roots are so valuable for fuel, and cause the surface to be so well drained. Pink heath and bee orchis peep out here and there; but the growth of all

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green herbage is sparse. During the last twenty years many sturdy little wind-sown pines have cropped up, and will, in the future, clothe the now bare and unsheltered waste.

After crossing the heath, a turn off to the left leads to Bushey, separating the first cultivated ground won from the waste by a turf-bank, clothed and mantled with strong growths of Blechnum and Polypodium fern. Here you are invariably assaulted by several pairs of peewits, who have evidently been brought up with a very bad opinion of mankind in general, circling round and round, with piercing cries and distressed mien, as if entreating mercy for their tender young ones among the damp reeds.

A turn to the right, at the end of Wych Heath, leads by a deep-rutted waggon-way, sometimes altogether disappearing in the heather and bracken, to Sharford Bridge, over the Corfe River, anciently called Wychewater, and one of the boundaries of the Liberty of Corfe. It is here only a sedge and rush-choked stream, grown up with alder and strong yellow flags.

Beyond this is Scotland, a bare and unproductive waste, crossed by the iron-road to Slape and Middlebere.

After passing these turnings, well-kept fields succeed, save where the vast thrown-up mounds of Thrasher's Hole clay pits, long worked out, disfigure the landscape, soon to be lost sight of, however, on entering a most lovely, secluded, high-banked lane, luxuriant with ferns and tall foxglove. Down at the bottom, a clear spring crosses the road by the cottage, and there the footpath clings to the hedge, looking down upon the narrow waggon-track far beneath you. Here signs of fine white china clay crop out of the bank, that will inevitably, in years to come, make a howling wilderness of even this lovely, sequestered spot.

Crossing the hard, chalky road by-and-by, a stile leads through a steep field, skirting the slope of Challow Hill, from whence is obtained a lovely view of Corfe Castle village, nestling in the deep hollow; every building in the dear old place of fresh grey Purbeck stone, unstained by time or smoke, though nearly all are built of the very stones rolled down the hill from the Castle, when the fine old fortress, that had successfully withstood so many sieges, was treacherously surrendered and blown up by the Parliamentary forces in 1645. But, just when the view is finest, further progress is, alas! stopped by the railway cutting, which has pierced this side of Challow Hill through metal-like rock of extraordinary hardness. A right of way existed here from time immemorial, to preserve which, the railway was bound to throw a foot-bridge across the line. The matter, however, was not mooted while yet within the limit of time, and the right of way is lost for ever.

Corfe Castle, and as much of the property hereabouts not owned either by Lord Eldon or Mr. Calcraft, belongs to Mr. Bankes of Kingston Lacey, a descendant of the brave Lady Bankes who herself so valiantly and successfully defended it against the Parliamentary troops with the help of her daughters, women servants, and five soldiers, by means of hot stones and burning embers cast down among the besiegers, who had previously surprised and taken the town under cover of a dense sea fog that had rolled up the valley from Swanage and concealed their movements. The sturdy old ruin, which is only allowed to be entered of late years on payment of toll, is mended, when time and weather assail it, with greatest care; the splendid herring-bone masonry testifies to the durability of the stone; and the mortar, locally termed bur,* is even harder than the stone, and also bears its silent witness to the faithful building of the Normans. There is but one nice old stone house of any pretension in Corfe; even the Rectory is some distance off, on the road to Creech Knowle. The cottages are neat, substantial, and comparatively modern. The oldest inn, the "Greyhound," appears to be of a date very much earlier than the figures, 1733, engraved on its heavy, overhanging porch. The church is a most interesting old building, well worth a visit. However useful to the present generation, one resents the presence of a particularly smart new railway-station at Corfe, with W. H. Smith's bookstalls, and all the newest publications, as an unwarrantable intrusion. The rooks at home in the castle-keep certainly do, for they never see a train speed by to Swanage or Wareham without expressing anger deep and loud. Corfe is still governed like a feudal town in the Middle Ages, though it has sturdily withstood the brunt of many a serious siege against its ancient liberties. From Challow Hill the Lord of Rempstone frowns down upon Corfe, and defies

* "History of Corfe Castle." Bond.

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all changes and chances of this mortal life, looking afar over the roofs and chimneys of the quiet town to the rival Lord of Encombe on the higher down beyond, whose lovely church of Kingston well repays a walk from Corfe.

Returning over the heath to the yacht at Wych Ferry, and gazing from a dry, sandy summit towards Wareham, the old legends of a thousand years gone by come clearly to mind. This heath of Wych, together with Middlebere, Slape, and Stoborough, constituted the Royal Chase of Wareham. It was this now lonely expanse of which the poor young King Edward—confined in the monastic seclusion of the Castle at Wareham, under the stern though faithful care of Archbishop Dunstan—thought with deep longing as an Eden upon earth. "I would fain hunt the deer in my Royal Chase of Wareham," * said the poor young creature of fourteen, tired to death of solitude, tasks, and the good Abbots, and longing for the society of his gay young half-brother Ethelred, then at Corfe with his mother. Mr. Bond, in his curious and authentic history of Corfe, relates that after being treacherously stabbed by order of Elfrida at the Castle gate, Edward fell, and was dragged by his frightened horse, plunging and thundering over the drawbridge, for some little distance. There the horse stopped, and the poor, battered corpse was then conveyed to the cottage of a blind woman hard by. On this spot, where the body was concealed the night after the murder, a small chapel, dedicated to Saint Edward, was erected, and was probably on the site of the present parish church dedicated to Saint Edward the Martyr. The same authority, Mr. Bond, says that "the body was next day buried in a secret and marshy place, known to this day as Saint Edward's Fountain, situated at the foot of the Castle hill, and still held in high estimation for the cure of weak eyes." A railway viaduct and the nice old grey stone bridge still known as Saint Edward's Bridge, span the Corfe River here; its banks choked with reeds, bulrushes, and tall yellow flag, are certainly marshy; but the spot must have been much more overgrown with trees, to be secluded enough for a secret burial-place. Tradition, says Mr. Bond, relates that "when search was made for the body, its place of sepulchre was discovered by a pillar of fire that illuminated the spot."

* Strickland's "Historical Tales."

Much science is not required to know that the gases rising from a hastily-interred and coffinless corpse in a wet place, would quite account for the lights seen. The remains were afterwards buried at Wareham, and at last were allowed to rest in peace at Shaftesbury. Old chronicles say that good Archbishop Dunstan saw his precious charge go forth for the last time, accompanied by a gay cavalcade of light-hearted youth, to hunt in the Royal Chase. "With tears of anguish and apprehension of coming ill, the austere man folded the delicate, loving boy, who might have made a great and glorious King, in his arms, and said, 'Thou goest, Edward, like a foolish bird from beneath its mother's wing ere it be fully fledged for flight. God grant that thou escape the serpent's jaws that are even now expanded to devour thee.'" *

On this lonely waste—only broken occasionally, and quite of late years, by small coverts enclosed with stout, turfy walls, where forest glades once teemed with oak and wych-elm—little firs lead a precarious existence: now threatened with fire, now cropped by the browsing cattle. Where the graceful deer once fled down leafy aisles of overarching wych-elm—their gaunt, bare arms stretching leafless and branchless towards the sky—a few rough staring-coated stirks pick up a scanty living among the turf, bracken, heather, and furze. Unaccustomed to man, they turn a surly, unfriendly eye on the wayfarer as he passes.

Where hawk and heron fought and bled in the days gone by for the sport of others, a solitary heron prancing over great sheets of shallow water has it all her own way, her whilom enemy vanquished and gone. Nothing but the voice of Nature breaks the silence of this desolate spot. Yet, in all the wide world, no sweeter, purer, more healthful place exists than Wych Heath. Fortunately, as yet, the clay works have not yet invaded the heath. Thrasher's pits have been worked out more than forty years ago; but at Norden, near Corfe, the workings have of late crept up to Arfleet Mill, turned by the waters of Corfe River, which, not long ago, was quite isolated.

While pondering on all the old-world memories of a thousand years gone by, as we tramp homewards, the farm and ferry have been steadily in sight for some time.

* Strickland's "Historical Tales."

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Embarking in our boat we reach the ship, and are welcomed by an appetising odour as of roast chicken and bread-sauce, with several et ceteras, cleverly prepared by Bill, after which we sit on deck and rest from our labours.

To Corfe and back, straight over the heath, is six miles, added to considerably by divers chases after ferns, flowers, and views.

"What do you do with yourselves when you are away at Poole and Wych?" is a question invariably addressed to us on our return. Much difficulty is always experienced in making a suitable and satisfactory reply. What do people in general know about the infinite rest and pleasure it is to be away with a beloved companion alone with Nature, and yet not to be in the condition of castaways in the desert? On the contrary, we fare better and more to our taste than at any other time. Cream, eggs, butter, milk, chickens, ducks, and vegetables are forthcoming at either Arne, or Wych Ferry. No such thick, sweet cream is obtainable at any other of our haunts; and no such delicious bread is to be got anywhere as that supplied by Cole, at Poole. Meat, also, is good and cheap.

These last are brought back in the market basket by whoever goes to Poole in the "kelpie" for our letters and papers; and, supplemented by a good sea stock of Rödel's excellent Bordeaux soups and "pâté de foie gras," we are never quite destitute.

Then Bill can be trusted to roast a chicken and make an "omelette aux fines herbes," quite to the satisfaction of even so "difficile" a personage as the "head of the family;" added to which the sweet, keen, pure air gives one an appetite, and sound sleep—what more can a reasonable creature want?

"Of course you have seen the famous clay-pits and the ultramarine blue works in Poole Harbour?" is next demanded of us. At last, quite ashamed of having to acknowledge that we know nothing about the clay, except seeing it towed down to Poole in barges, we filled up with eggs, butter, and cream one morning, unmoored from our posts at Wych Ferry, and, escaping the traps laid for the unwary, in the shape of booms far removed from the real points, ran down past Shipstall, circumnavigated Branksea, and entered the South Deep.

Several years had passed since last visiting this side; but, owing to much foreign traffic, brought by the increasing output of clay at Goathorn, this tortuous and shallow channel is well marked.

Two white schooner yachts lay at anchor in South Deep, wash clothes, bath towels, flannels, and other paraphernalia in the rigging showing that, like ourselves, they were real floating homes, with the family, babies and all, on board. We brought-up close to Goathorn Quay, and anchored near the German schooner "Annette," shipping clay for Hamburg.

Taking our luncheon in a basket, a small lug-sail was hoisted in the "kelpie," the largest of our boats, measuring eight feet by three feet, and we circumnavigated Ower Bay, without, however, seeing the ghost of a landing-place anywhere. Finding absolutely no hospitality, we sailed up the next arm, to Redhorn Quay, and, landing, walked over the heath, inspecting with much interest Curlew Cottage, just built for Mr. Baillie-Hamilton in, I suppose, the loneliest spot in England. The cottage is well sheltered by the cliff, and a sturdy little plantation of Austrian pines, with lovely views of Old Harry, Studland, Poole Bar, and the "little sea" from the front windows.

Here the abstrusest problems may be thought out, when wandering over the heath by narrow sheep-tracks, without a possibility of intrusion; unless, indeed, one of the shaggy little stirks, in a semi-wild state, may unfortunately take a dislike to you and resent the impertinence of your appearance.

Skirting some newly enclosed land where the crops of the future are to grow, and in the black, damp ditches whereof thousands of great, strong, woody plants of "Osmunda Regalis" fern flourish as in the tropics, the quiet little village of Studland can be reached.

On this occasion we had the clay-pits to visit; so, re-embarking, we pulled round to Goathorn Quay again, where it is evidently intended no one shall land—not the scantest accommodation for getting ashore being provided except over the clay vessels.

This is a nice, quiet anchorage, and vegetables may be purchased at the cottage; but no milk or cream at any price, and no water nearer than a mile and a half. Landing on Goathorn Quay after great exertions, we followed the line of rails through a lovely fir-wood. When half-way through, in the loneliest place, we came to a shallow pool, where apparently

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a dreadful murder had recently been committed. The water was of a dark blood-red; but, curiously enough, was only caused by the earth, through which the drainage had soaked, being of exactly the same formation and colour as the Alum Bay sand cliffs in the Isle of Wight. A stratum had just cropped up in this spot, all around being of the usual ground tint. A walk of a mile and a half brought us to the offices, depôt, and cluster of houses tenanted by the clay-workers and their families. Here the welcome shade of the fir-wood came to an end, and the next half-mile lay between great, hot, dazzling banks of white clay, "weathering," or thrown aside, till the end of the workings in Goathorn Pit is arrived at. The land is all Rempstone property, leased by Mr. Pinhey of Nordon, who employs a large number of men. The spade used for digging is something like a graft, but flat in the blade, and has a long, tapered handle. It is "jumped" up and down, cutting neat square slabs out of a perpendicular wall of clay, generally about the consistency of new cheese. The spade weighs twenty-eight pounds, and costs twenty-four shillings. These men, a stalwart, independent race, peculiar to the Isle of Purbeck, get one shilling and a halfpenny per yard; but three shillings a day is only earned after great toil. Their clothes, faces, and hair are powdered with fine white dust; but it does not appear to be unwholesome, as they are exceptionally fine men. There are three layers of clay, one above the other, the line of demarkation being pretty sharp. The upper layer, next to the surface, is dark grey, and useless; then comes a lighter silver grey, called London clay; lowest of all lies the fine white pottery-clay, which, after being dug, is piled into great heaps along the line, and left exposed for three years, when it all crumbles, and is then shipped to home or foreign ports. Great quantities of useless material have first to be dug out in this costly manner before the London clay, which is used for drain-pipes and tiles, is arrived at, so they fill up the worked out holes with refuse as they go on; it is exactly like shot-drill in a prison. The first layer of dark, greenish-brown clay next to the surface is useless, on account of the quantity of what are locally termed "mundicks" it contains, which appear to be a sort of iron slag, and look like old nails, small rusty bolts, and little fat bits of fused metal. The best white clay is extremely tenacious, the spade requiring to be wetted several times before getting out a spit; and its weight is something tremendous, making the work most exhausting. The Staffordshire potteries consume immense quantities; Germany takes thousands of tons a year, and Sweden is a good customer; the exports of clay from Poole being more than seventy thousand tons annually. The component parts of Poole clay are silica, alumina, and earth. Burnt bones, turned into phosphate of lime, together with clay and decomposed flint, are said to be the materials of which fine china is made. The coarser London clay is consumed in great quantities at the Hamworthy Pottery Works, Poole, in the manufacture of drain-pipes, etc.

No more desolate sight exists in the world than a worked-out clay-pit. Giant heaps of sticky refuse are thrown up on one side, draining down into deep, open, cavernous holes, sodden and noisome with green, stagnant water. The earth having been rifled of its rich treasures, a pitiable scene of desolation is left, quite spoiling the face of the country near it. A few, very few, stunted shrubs, tufts of rank sedge-grass, rushes, coarse heather, moss, and unwholesome fungi, strive in vain, even after the passage of half a century, to cover with a sparse mantle of grey-green the gruesome, suicidal-prompting spots, resembling extinct volcanoes, left by the clay-workers. No flower ever blooms to cheer the waste, and any species of vegetation seems to shrink from growing upon these foul heaps. Perhaps, in years to come, when our island becomes yet more thickly populated, the clay mounds will be smoothed anew, and sweet, short green turf again be cropped by remote descendants of the South Down sheep, which now dot the swelling uplands of Nine Barrow Down, from Corfe to the sea at Studland.

Besides the iron road conveying the clay dug at Goathorn Pit direct to the ships at the quay—thus saving all the transhipment in and out of barges—another line of rails takes the Nordon clay, dug near Corfe, across to Middlebere, where it is stored; a third line conveys that particularly fine clay dug at Furzebrook, near Creech, away to Ridge, in the Wareham Channel, from thence, by barge, to Poole Quay, and by schooner to Runcorn (for Staffordshire). These are at present the only pits worked hereabouts.

Our visit achieved, we sailed round to

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Poole with the morning tide, to lay in provisions, visit the blue works, and see what becomes of the clay after it is dug. Landing at Chesils, late Wanhills Yard, on the Hamworthy side, and passing Poole Bridge, a walk of about half a mile brings you to the huge chimney, and long range of sheds, jealously guarded against all comers, appertaining to the great blue works, now managed by a company. First, a small fragment of the loveliest blue colour crops up in the road, then another; and, as you gradually near the building, a general blueness pervades even the grass. Great precautions being necessary to guard the secrets of manufacture, a silence as of the grave reigns outside the gates, and not a human being was to be seen of whom to make enquiries. Descrying a bell, we rang, and were scanned with much suspicion by a boy, who appeared to be powdered and soaked in blue, through a small postern door, which he unbolted in order to have a look at us. It appeared that no entrance could be sanctioned without special permission from Mr. Wheatley, the secretary in Poole. But by the courtesy of the foreman, we were allowed to see what was going forward in the first room. There was our time-honoured friend, the grey clay, pulverised and mixed with fire-brick clay. With this mixture they fashion great fat moulds, like pails, the inside scooped round and round by a wooden gauge. These moulds are only for the purpose of making the clay pots in which the white clay is burned. The smaller are like elongated flower-pots, about eighteen inches high, tapering to the bottom; the top is flat, like that of a salt-jar. These two sorts of moulds being burned hard in a furnace, the smaller is ready to be filled with pulverised white clay mixed with resin and soda, at least, those were the only ingredients mentioned; but it is not likely that the secret of this wonderful transformation of the clay we have just seen dug out of the earth, into a lovely deep ultramarine blue, is communicated to chance visitors and the world at large. These oblong pots are then filled with the mixture, very carefully pressed down, and fashioned round and round the top with almost absurd care, by men whose only work is this of filling the jars, and who look like sickly millers. These jars are then stood, with their tops on, in furnaces, and burned to a red heat for thirty-six hours. A most exact temperature has to be maintained throughout, as, if it is allowed to cool at all during the process, the result is a lovely green instead of blue; but equally valuable. A great sugar-loaf of blue was taken out of the mould entire. It was then scraped, all stray bits and dust being swept into a bin. After this, we were told it was ground and washed, then dried and sifted; but we saw no more with our own eyes.

The whole place, including the faces and clothes of the workmen, is tinted blue; and, outside the jealously-closed gates, are great heaps of blue refuse and broken pots, which, pounded fine, would make excellent garden paths.

Before this grand discovery, a great portion of our Poole clay was bought by Germany, and returned to us as blue, but at enormously enhanced prices. Now, with the precious material at their very doors, a great saving is effected; the market price, of somewhere about thirty-six pounds a ton, being very remunerative to the Hamworthy company.

An interesting article in the "Times" stated that the ultramarine blue, formerly so much prized for its loveliness, was made by burning lapis-lazuli, and was worth five guineas an ounce. The blue made from Poole clay is said to be equal to the ancient ultramarine; and the fact that its production costs only about a penny an ounce is worthy of note.

MARGERY.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

By MARY ANGELA DICKENS.

CHAPTER V.

It was a moonlight evening, warm and still. The air was full of the soft, sweet, indescribable scent brought by the night wind, which rustled overhead with that mysterious sound that only the night wind makes, and which always seems to whisper of some great secret it would tell, if only ears could be found to hear and understand. As it rose and fell softly and irregularly among the trees, there mixed with it a distant sound of music — a woman's voice, rich and sweet, floating through an open window — and as it reached him, Douglas Hollis, walking up and down the lawn with a cigar, turned towards it, and stood listening. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and he listened so intently that he did not hear Margery's

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footsteps, as she came out of the glass door leading from the drawing-room, and crossed the lawn to his side. She stood beside him, quietly watching his face.

They had been at Orchard Court for more than three months, and since the night of the Camdens' dinner-party, had complained no more of Hackley society. Mr. Bazerley had proved a most delightful neighbour, and, as the people about were no more congenial to him than they were to the Hollises, he rapidly became very intimate at Orchard Court. He had fished and shot with Douglas; sung, played, and sauntered with Estelle; on this evening, as on so many others, he was with her at the piano in the drawing-room. Only Margery had never been able to overcome her first rather unpleasant impression of him, and had often remembered, and shivered a little as she remembered, Estelle's strange impression as she passed his cottage on her first arrival at her home. And those three months, which had seemed on the surface to pass so quietly and happily away, had changed Margery as three years had failed to change her before.

The time when she had been able to persuade herself that Douglas was indeed the radiantly happy husband she had expected to see him, was long past now. Day by day, and week by week, she had been forced to stand by and watch him suffer; watch his patient, tender efforts to win a soft word or look from his wife; his ceaseless hunger for the love that was always withheld. Never, by word or look, had he alluded to his pain. He was always brave, always outwardly cheerful; but—Margery saw.

About the mouth that always smiled so merrily were sad little lines, that told of ceaseless anxiety and pain; the small brown face was thinner, and in the frank brown eyes there was a look of helpless, pitying tenderness and pain. As she stood there in the moonlight, the child Margery seemed to have disappeared. They stood motionless—Douglas absorbed in the voice of the woman he loved, Margery in her thought for him—until the voice suddenly ceased, and then, with a heavy sigh, Douglas raised his head and saw her at his side.

"Well, little one," he said, "is she coming?"

At the sound of his sigh Margery's face had twitched nervously; but she answered in a tone which was light enough, if a little forced.

"Presently," she says. "They have some new duets to try."

"Ah," said Douglas, "Bazerley has been a wonderful find in the musical line. She missed it terribly."

Margery did not answer; and, after a moment's pause, during which he relit his cigar, he went on, with a glance at her grave little face:

"It seems to me, little one, that you don't care much about Bazerley. You are always such a serious little one when he is here; and as we see so much of him now, it seems to me that it is getting to be a chronic condition with you. What is it? Don't you like him?"

She raised her eyes and gave one quick, wondering look, right into his face as he looked down at her; and then dropping them again, said, in a very low voice:

"No, Douglas."

"But why? He has been such a jolly neighbour, such a blessed variety in the dead-alive society about here! He has cheered up Estelle quite wonderfully. I don't know what we should have done without him all the summer."

Again she gave him a quick look; and this time the wondering pain in it shone out so clearly that if his eyes had met hers he must have seen it. But his head was turned away, and he went on:

"It isn't like you to dislike any one without a reason, Margery. Tell me what it is you don't like about Bazerley. Tell me—— Hush!" he added, softly, lifting his hand, and turning towards the house. It was Estelle's voice again, singing very softly and sweetly; and he listened, all his face filled with an unutterable love and patient longing, until with one long, tender note it died away. Then, quite suddenly, something seemed to break him down. He dropped his face upon his hands with one hoarse, choking sob.

Every vestige of colour died out of Margery's face, and for a moment she neither moved nor spoke. Then the instinct to comfort him mastered her own suffering, and she put her little cold hands on his.

"Douglas, dear," she whispered, "Douglas, dear!" He did not move, and after a moment's pause she went on, still in a whisper: "Douglas, Douglas, can I do nothing for you?"

Then very slowly he lifted his head and looked at her face as he held it in his two hands.

"No, my little one," he said, "not even you."

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His voice was quite calm, but very low, and sadder in its quiet even than his sob had been. He dropped his hands the next moment, and turned away, saying:

"Go in, dear. It is only nine o'clock. I shall go for a walk."

She did not speak again, or try to stop him; something in his face prevented her. She only stood there, watching him, as he disappeared in the moonlight, with an expression in her eyes as if she had received a death-blow. Then, as he passed out of sight, she turned, and went into the house; and on her set, white face there was a new look of fixed determination. There was one thing she could do for him—only one—and that might do no good; but she must try, at least.

Half an hour later she and Estelle were alone together in the drawing-room. Mr. Baserley had only just left them, and Estelle was saying:

"Margery, dear, you look very tired. I think you had better go to bed. I shall go soon myself."

"You will not wait for Douglas?" said Margery, wistfully.

"Of course not," was Estelle's answer.

Margery turned a shade whiter. She did not speak again, until Estelle paused at the door of her room to say good-night. Then she said, suddenly, holding Estelle's hands in both her own:

"Estelle, won't you come in?"

She did not wait for an answer, but drew her into the room, which was lighted only by the moon, and, gently putting her into a low chair near the open window, knelt down at her feet.

"Estelle!" she began, "Estelle! Oh, don't be very angry with me, dear, for what I'm going to say. If you knew—if you only knew how terrible it is to me——"

She caught her breath sharply, and the curly head was pressed for a moment against the shoulder of the beautiful woman who sat so very still and cold above her. Estelle made no answer, and she went on, with a great effort:

"You've been so sweet and good to me always, and that makes it harder; but it is for your sake, too, because I know—I know it will be misery for both of you, for both of you!"

Again she stopped, fighting bravely with her choking, sobbing breath, and Estelle said very coldly:

"I don't understand you, Margery. You had better not say any more. You are over-excited."

Margery controlled herself with a violent effort.

"Estelle," she said, "it isn't that. I want to talk to you quietly; I have something serious to say. Dear Estelle, you know I love you, and you know that one must notice things about people we love. Of course—I have seen—ever since—you came home—that—that——"

But Estelle stopped her.

"Margery," she said, and her voice was like ice, "do not say any more. It will do no good. What right have you to interfere?"

Margery lifted herself up, and looked for a moment straight into her face.

"I have no right," she cried—"I have no right; but—Estelle, Estelle, his heart is breaking——" Her voice gave way, her calm broke utterly, and she fell across Estelle's knees in a sudden passion of tears. "Estelle," she sobbed, "what is it? How was it? Did you never love him? Oh, Estelle, Estelle, pity him!"

Her voice died away, and for the next few minutes nothing was heard in the room but the sound of her sobs.

Estelle sat quite still, looking down at the quivering figure at her knees; and, as she looked, an expression of pity rose in the proud, disdainful blue eyes. At last, as Margery's sobs became fewer and more exhausted, she stretched out her hand and touched the rough, brown curls with a touch that was curiously tender, though slight enough, and perfectly undisturbed.

"Margery," she said, and though her voice was as calm as ever, she spoke in a hesitating manner most unusual to her. "Margery, I think I should like to tell you. It will not help you, poor child—poor child, and I do not know why I should talk to you; but I—I am fond of you."

She stopped, and Margery whispered:

"You did love him?"

"Yes, I suppose I did. But they have spoilt me all my life, Margery; and all my life I have wanted something fresh. He was fresh—quite different to the kind of men I knew—society men. He was so earnest and so simple. I thought I loved him—quite." She waited a moment, and seemed to consider; then went on: "But then when it was all settled, when we were married and there was no possibility of any change, then I got tired of him. I was tired before we had been married a week, and I have been tired ever since."

Margery made no answer. She lay

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quite still, shivering now and then from head to foot, her face hidden, her hands locked together. Estelle sat looking down at her for some time without speaking again, watching her curiously. At last she said:

"Margery, don't you hate me?"

Margery lifted her head, and looked at her with her faithful brown eyes wide and dim with pain.

"Hate you!" she said, softly. "Hate you, Estelle! You don't understand at all. Douglas loves you; how could I hate you? You don't understand! Estelle," she went on, as she crept closer to her and clasped her still more firmly in her arms as her voice sank almost to a whisper, "Estelle, it is just because I love you so much, and there is no one but me to help you, even the tiniest bit, that I must say something else—something I meant to say when I began—something I have wanted to say for—weeks." She paused, as if her breath had suddenly failed; then in a voice so low that it was hardly audible, she murmured: "Estelle—Mr. Bazerley." She was not looking into Estelle's face; she did not see it suddenly lose every trace of tenderness, and harden into marble as she spoke the last words; but she felt the slender figure in her clasp grow suddenly rigid and repellent to her tender touch, and she went on hurriedly, in a half-suffocated voice: 'Estelle, don't! Oh, don't draw away from me like that! Don't you understand how terrible it is to feel that I must say it; how terrible it has been to see it all this time, and know that no one else saw it, that there was no one to help you but me? Ever since it came into my head first, I have never had it out of my thoughts; I have never been happy for a moment. I don't know how I ever came to think of such a dreadful thing, how I could ever——" Then, with a sudden change, she cried, wildly: "Estelle! Estelle! tell me that I've made a wicked mistake! Tell me, oh, tell me that you don't——!" She was kneeling at Estelle's feet, her white face and clasped, quivering hands raised in a passion of agonised entreaty. But as her straining, beseeching eyes met the eyes of the woman above her, she read her answer there, and covering her face with her hands, crouched down on the floor with one low, shuddering moan. Not another sound was heard in the room. Estelle rose, and turning from her, stood at the window, erect and disdainful in pose and gesture even then, looking with unseeing eyes over the fields and hedges lying so calm and still under the peaceful moon. There was a long, terrible silence. Then, at last, Margery rose slowly, and went towards Estelle as she stood there, her graceful figure clearly outlined in the moonlight. "My poor Estelle," she said, softly, taking one of the long white hands gently into her little brown ones, "Oh, my poor Estelle."

At the gentle touch and voice, Estelle turned sharply.

"What do you mean?" she said. "Why don't you go away?"

"Because I want you to let me help you," the tender voice went on. "How can I ever help you if I go away now? Oh, dear Estelle, let me, let me help you."

For a moment Estelle drew herself up, as if to turn proudly and coldly away; but as her eyes met those which looked into her face so earnestly, her purpose changed. Suddenly she stretched out both hands to Margery, and, catching her in her arms, whispered brokenly:

"Save me, Margery; save me."

Before they parted that night she had told Margery everything. Stephen Bazerley had come into her life, at Orchard Court, just as she was beginning to feel utterly weary of it and of all her surroundings. He had amused her; he was never dull or commonplace, as her disdainful caprice found the husband who adored her. She had chosen to ignore the terms of half-serious flirtation on which they had previously stood, and had allowed herself to drift gradually on, until now it was her latest fancy to imagine herself in love with him.

With him it was no fancy. He had found her bored with her life; indifferent to her husband; more lovely, more charming than ever; and he had taken advantage of the situation at once. He had meant to amuse himself, after his cynical fashion, to make himself necessary to this beautiful, cold woman; and he had ended by loving her with a fierce, mad passion, which had overwhelmed his cynicism, his self-control, every light by which he had hitherto lived.

Margery never knew, exactly, what passed between her and Estelle that night; never could remember how she finally prevailed. She only knew that, at last, she did prevail; that, when she left her at last, Estelle had promised that Stephen Bazerley should go away, and that she would never see him again.

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CHAPTER VI.

It was a very white-faced, dark-eyed Margery who waited the next morning until Estelle and Douglas should come to breakfast; so white and tired-looking that Douglas exclaimed, as he said good-morning:

"What did you do to yourselves last night, you and Estelle? You are both like ghosts this morning!" Then, catching sight of a letter lying on his plate, he went on, without waiting for an answer, "Hallo, a letter from Brownlow!" He opened and read it quickly, with an exclamation of dismay, and then said: "Margery, will you ring, dear? He sends me very bad news — business news. I must catch the 9.50 to town."

A little cry broke from Margery, and she stood with her hand on the back of the chair in which she had not yet seated herself, her eyes fixed on Estelle's face, her lips a little parted. Douglas went on:

"I'm not altogether surprised. I've known for some time that I might have to go away for a time; but, as it was so uncertain, I thought it wasn't worth while to bother about it. It is a nuisance; but there is no alternative. I must go."

Estelle had not moved or spoken even at his first words. Now she said slowly, in a low, strange voice:

"Is it absolutely necessary, Douglas?"

He was at her side in a moment.

"Would I leave you, Estelle, even for a day, if I could help it?"

She raised her eyes to the face that was bending over her, and something in its loving, tender look seemed to touch her. She rose suddenly, and, stretching out her hands to him impulsively, said:

"Take me with you, Douglas; take me with you!"

He caught her hands in his and kissed them eagerly.

"Thank you, my darling, thank you," he said, and his voice was full of passionate love. "I would take you more gladly than I can say; but it is impossible. I may have to go abroad, to travel fast and rough it a bit. No; you must stay here and welcome me back."

The eagerness died suddenly out of her face. She dropped his hands, and stood for a moment looking into his face.

"It is impossible?" she said.

"Sweetheart, it is impossible," he answered.

At Estelle's words, Margery's face had lighted up with an inexpressible joy and hope; but, as she listened to Douglas's answer, it died away and left her very pale and cold. For an instant, she felt as if she must speak; as if she could not, must not let Douglas go away and leave them alone. Estelle had listened to her last night, had promised to send Stephen Bazerley away that very day; but would he go, would Estelle hold firm? As this last thought rose in her mind, she turned to Douglas with an impulse to keep him at any price.

"Douglas," she began, "Douglas," but the sight of his tender, regretful face as he looked at his wife, stopped her suddenly. He had refused Estelle; he had told her that his going was absolutely necessary. Nothing would stop him but the truth, and the truth she could not tell him. It would break his heart.

During the busy half-hour that followed she moved about mechanically, until at last she woke to the fact that she and Douglas were alone together for a moment, and that he was holding both her hands in a strong, earnest clasp.

"Little one," he was saying, "you know what it is to me to be parted from her; you know what she is to me. I leave you in her care. Take care of her for me. Margery, take care of my love."

But Margery looked straight into his face, and answered:

"Douglas, I will."

Then he was gone.

For some time life passed quietly and smoothly at Orchard Court. Douglas wrote constantly, but the date of his return was always uncertain. Margery's bright spirits never flagged, though she sometimes told herself that she was beginning to feel "quite old."

Estelle never mentioned Stephen Bazerley. Margery knew that she had written to him on the day of Douglas's departure; knew that he had left Hackley; and knew no more. To her, Estelle was always tender and sweet, though the old, listless apathy had returned, and she seemed to care for nothing; to be interested in no one.

It had been a hot day, and Margery, who was not so strong as she had once been, had suffered so much from the heat, that in the evening Estelle insisted on leaving her on the sofa and taking her walk alone. Margery lay quietly reading for more than an hour, and gradually fell asleep. She slept on and on until the daylight faded, and it grew quite dark; and

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at last she suddenly started up with a stifled cry: "Yes, Douglas," she said, aloud, "I will! I will!" Then, as consciousness returned to her more fully, she sank back again, trembling from head to foot, and tried to remember what it was that she had dreamt. What had Douglas said to her? Why had he looked so sad and stern? "Where is my love, Margery? Where is my love?" As the remembrance flashed vividly back on her, she sprang to her feet and rang the bell.

"Has Mrs. Hollis come in?" she asked the man who answered it.

"Yes, miss," he answered. "She came in about an hour ago. She said she wouldn't disturb you, and she left her love and good-night."

"Her love and good-night!" echoed Margery. "Why, has she gone to bed? It can't be late. It is hardly dark."

"It is about half-past eight, miss," answered the man. "My mistress looked—looked—not very well, miss, I think."

"Oh, I am sorry!" said Margery. "I wish she had woke me. I will go up to her at once."

But her gentle knock at Estelle's door received no answer, and she repeated it twice, before the clear, low voice said:

"What is it?"

"It is I, Estelle—Margery. Is anything the matter? May I not come in?"

There was a pause, and then Estelle answered:

"Not to-night. I am tired."

Margery hesitated. She felt that to go away like that would be impossible. Something had surely happened. What could it be?

"Estelle," she said at last, very gently, "Estelle, is anything the matter?"

Again there was a pause, and then Estelle said, in a tone against which Margery felt that it was impossible to appeal:

"Nothing; good night."

"Good night, dear Estelle," said Margery, reluctantly, and went away.

But the next morning she reproached herself bitterly for having done so. Estelle came down looking so white, so worn, and yet with something so absorbed and unapproachable in her manner, that Margery could only make timid, tender enquiries as to whether she was ill, and regret from the bottom of her heart that she had left her alone the night before. Directly after breakfast Estelle went back to her room, saying that her head ached badly, and that she only wanted to be alone; and when callers came late in the afternoon, she sent down excuses, and begged that Margery would explain. Explain! Margery only wished she could! The callers were two sisters, the liveliest girls in the place, and they entertained Margery with a tirade against the dulness of Hackley and the surrounding neighbourhood.

"We were so sorry to hear that Mr. Bazerley had gone away for good," said the elder. "This summer has been a little less dull than usual, thanks to him and to Mr. and Mrs. Hollis and you, Miss Venner; and I hoped he would have cheered us up through the winter. We thought he had quite settled down; and then he went away so suddenly; and I believe he is not coming back at all."

"But he has come back," interposed her sister. "Did I not tell you, Lill, I saw him yesterday evening down in Old Foxley Lane? He must have been for a walk, I suppose, for one hardly ever sees any one there."

The news was so deeply interesting and exciting to both sisters that neither of them noticed Margery's silence, or the expression of her face as she wished them good-bye a few minutes later. That she did so with absolute calmness and self-possession was astonishing to herself as she realised what they had said. Mr. Bazerley back in Hackley, and Estelle—— What did it mean?

It was a close, sultry evening, with heavy thunder-clouds darkening the sky; and with a sense of absolute suffocation, Margery, alone in her own room, pushed the window yet more widely open, and kneeling down by it, laid her hot face on the sill. What ought she to do? What could she do now? For the first time she seemed to realise the position—to understand. In the passion of love and pain that had driven her to speak on that night, Estelle personally had had no place at all in her thoughts. It was for Douglas, through Douglas alone, that she had felt. She had been altogether carried away and overstrung; and her devoted love and pity for him had encircled his wife also, and thrown about her a halo which nothing could have dissipated. But now, now with no strong emotion working on her, with simply facts forcing themselves upon her, she seemed to see it all from an entirely new point of view, and her whole soul seemed to rise in repulsion against the woman who could do this thing.

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Douglas loved her, Douglas trusted her utterly, and she had given her heart to a man so base that he could steal it from the husband to whom it belonged. She started to her feet with flaming cheeks and shining eyes, and stood there with her hands pressed tightly together, and her mouth set as its gentle lines had never set themselves before. She was thinking how she could bear to meet Estelle, to speak to her, to take her hand. Ah, it was impossible! She was too wicked—too wicked. Suddenly, as her anger rose every moment higher and higher against the woman who had so wronged Douglas, there came a hurried knock at the door. She started violently, and instinctively waited for the knock to be repeated, that she might have time to master herself sufficiently to allow her to say, steadily, as it came the second time, "Come in." It was a servant with a telegram; it said only:

"Shall be home this evening. —DOUGLAS."

The servant had left the room, and, as she finished reading, the paper fluttered to the floor from her trembling fingers, and she lifted her hands vaguely and uncertainly to her head.

Coming home! Douglas was coming home! What had he said to her when he went away? "Margery, take care of my love!" His love—his love! It was Douglas's love of whom she had been thinking these terrible things. How long had she been there, she wondered? It was growing dark—very dark. She picked up the telegram, and, as she did so, she noticed that it was addressed to Mrs. Hollis!

Why, of course it was for Estelle! How stupid of the servant! Why had he brought it to her? She must take it to Estelle at once. No; she would wait a little before she went to her. She would send the servant.

"This is for Mrs. Hollis," she said to the woman who answered her bell; "why did you bring it to me?"

"Please, miss, we couldn't find the mistress," was the answer. "She must have gone out, I think. She is not in her room or anywhere about downstairs."

"Gone out!" said Margery, with a wondering glance at the lowering sky; "gone out!"

Even as she uttered the words, with a flash of unerring conviction she knew why Estelle was out, and with whom.

The sudden shock of the thought seemed to steady her, to brace her nerves up. Hastily telling the servant that her master would be home some time that evening, she took her hat and went quickly out of the house.

Estelle must be found; must be found at once. All the personal feeling of anger and repulsion that had shaken her a little while before, had disappeared. It was Douglas's love she was going to look for. It was for his sake she must be found. She had no clue, except the words of the girl who had spoken of seeing Mr. Bazerley in Old Foxley Lane—an almost disused road, running round a particularly dreary bit of moorland. And to Old Foxley Lane she hurried. But she found no one. She went on and on, hoping against hope, that each turn of the road would bring in sight the graceful figure for which she strained her eyes in vain. Estelle—to find Estelle—was all her thought.

Suddenly, lying on the ground a little in front of her, she saw a handkerchief—a lady's handkerchief. She picked it up eagerly, and in the corner was the slender, finely-embroidered "E," that she had once said, laughingly, was so like Estelle herself.

She had been there, then—she had been there! Where was she now? Why, there was something else lying in the road. A letter. Estelle must have dropped that, too. A letter addressed to Margery herself.

For a moment Margery stood with the envelope in her hand, staring at it as if fascinated. A sudden, unspeakable fear fell on her. Why should Estelle write to her?

Sick, and cold as death, with shaking fingers and twitching lips, she opened the letter, and, standing in the lonely lane with the twilight falling round, and the yellow light of the coming storm to light her, she read it. It told her that Estelle was gone.

Margery stood there motionless, her face grey and drawn, her eyes dilated, staring at the words that seemed to be burning themselves into her brain. The storm was darkening round her, little gusts of wind ruffled the brown hair, and caught at her dress, and at the letter in her hand. Great drops of rain began to fall. Gradually she became conscious of some other words—words which she seemed to hear at first far off, and indistinctly, but which came gradually nearer and nearer, until the air rang with them; they were deafening her—crushing her: "My love! My love! Margery, take care of my love! Take care of my love!" Douglas had said that to her, and this, this was how she had done it. Why, he might be at home now, waiting

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for them, waiting for Estelle—for Estelle, who was gone! But was she gone? As this new thought entered her head, the terrible voices round her suddenly ceased, and clasping her hands over her eyes, she struggled to think, to understand.

This letter had been dropped, like the handkerchief, by accident. Estelle had not intended it to reach her until the next morning. Perhaps—oh, perhaps, after all, it was not too late! She raised her head suddenly, a passion of intense hope shining in her eyes, and, coming down the lane towards her, she saw a little boy. They must have gone in that direction. He might have seen them. He came slowly along, apparently looking for something, and as he came up to her, he said:

"There wur a lady dropped a letter hereabouts. Happen you've seen it, miss?"

Margery's heart seemed to stand still.

"A lady!" she said. "Where?"

"On t' Farley Road yonder, driving in a carriage along of a gentleman. Her gave me a half-crown for to put it in post, but I canna find it."

Then, in an instant, Margery saw it all. They were driving to Farley, a lonely village on a small branch—one from which they could go away by train unnoticed. Unless they could be reached before that, Estelle was lost indeed. It was a long, winding road, up and down hill; but there was a footpath across country that joined Farley Road with Old Foxley Lane, and was not quite half as long as the driving road.

"When did you see her, and how far from here?" she asked the lad, in such a sharp tone, that he answered at once, with a stare:

"No more nor a quarter-hour gone a little bit on."

A quarter of an hour! A quarter of an hour's start! There was no one to help her, no one to trust to. "Take care of my love, Margery! Take care of my love!" Douglas was coming—might be waiting now! He should not wait in vain—she would save Estelle for him, and take her back.

Without a moment's pause, without another thought but that she must do it, that she must be there in time, she sprang over the stile into the footpath, and started on her almost hopeless chase. On she ran, till her breath came quick and fast, and she felt a sharp pain gather round her heart. On, on, quicker and quicker, her face turning whiter, her eyes wild and large, her breath coming in quick, painful sobs.

The storm had broken fiercely, and her quickly-soaked dress seemed to hold her back; the lightning dazzled her. The pain was getting sharper every instant, turning her sick and giddy. A dreadful fear seized her that she was going slower—that in another moment she must fall.

Hark! What was that? It was a faint, distant, indistinct sound which seemed to bring back, all at once, her failing strength, to put new life into her trembling limbs—the far-off sound of wheels, the quick trot of horses.

She was so near the road that she could see the opening through which she must reach it; could see, too, coming rapidly along the road, a carriage. Could she do it? Would she be in time? If that carriage passed the gap before she could reach it, Estelle was utterly lost, and Douglas——!

With one last agonised effort, choked, blinded, she rushed desperately forward, and, as Stephen Bazerley drove rapidly along by Foxley Gap, a little figure sprang, as it seemed, out of the hedgerow, and caught blindly at the rein of the horses, while a strained, shrill, unnatural voice cried hoarsely, "Estelle! Estelle!" as Margery fell senseless under the horses' feet.

"She moved a little!"

They had carried the poor little broken figure into the drawing-room at Orchard Court where Douglas Hollis was waiting for his wife; and there, by the side of the little girl who had loved him, all unconsciously, with such a perfect woman's love that she had given her life for the woman he loved — that woman, utterly crushed by her pity and remorse, had prayed for his forgiveness.

"She moved a little."

It was Douglas Hollis who spoke; and at the sound of his voice the poor little ashen face quivered, the drawn lips moved, and slowly the faithful brown eyes unclosed. It was on Douglas's face that they rested; and the look of perfect love that they had always held for him in life shone in them now that death was clouding them fast.

"Douglas," she whispered, faintly, "I did take care of her, Douglas—dear!"

Then Margery died.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 36.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I. RUSHBROOK HOUSE.

IT would be very difficult to say at which time of the year the country about Rushbrook Beacon shows to most advantage. Beautiful it always is, this high moorland, which Nature has enriched with every colour that can most please the eye and send immeasurable joy into a heart that loves beauty. This Beacon is the highest land in Southshire, and one can look round on every side and see a wondrous diversity of views; from the south, where blue undulating hills speak of pastures on sunny slopes, to the north, where the long, stern ridge of heathy moor, marked out by solitary fir clumps, makes one realise the silent majesty of uncultivated lands, through which man has ventured on no other sign of his cunning than by making the broad, sandy high-road, where formerly the heavy coach rolled on towards the sea-coast, but where now picturesque country waggons crawl happily along, scorning the bare idea of the steam monster that has almost swallowed up all the carriers' carts of the more inhabited neighbourhoods.

The high ridges of the moorland, or forest, as it is called, sweep away from the north to the west. On the east, as we stand on the Beacon, we can forget the grand desolation behind us, and, in our milder moods, we may feel glad that here the character of the land has nothing rugged about it; that the great sea of heather has been forbidden to advance; and that, amidst green meadows and gentle undulations rising one behind the other, friendly windmills stretch out their four arms, courting the winds and gaily racing through their morning's work, making music among the sails.

The Beacon has about a mile of almost flat land on its summit, and gradually slopes down on the north-west side to a beautiful valley, at the head of which stands Rushbrook House. Once it had been connected with a water-mill; but the grinding of the latter had ceased long ago, and Nature and art had contrived to render this spot one of the most lovely in the country; for the forest land had collected its trickling streams and had formed along the valley four exquisite pools, and these were edged with luxuriant trees of every description, coming sometimes close to the edge, sometimes climbing up steep hills on either side.

The village of Rushbrook lay scattered about on the top of the Beacon, where only one big house was to be seen. It was named "The Observatory," because this circular building had been added to a large and not very picturesque modern dwelling. Here lived Lord Cartmel, though he was chiefly to be found in the observatory chamber, star-gazing or poring over astronomical books. His only son, the Honourable Walter Akister, was a barrister, and had chambers in the Temple; but oftenest he might be seen at Rushbrook, and, like Cœlebs, he was said to be in search of a wife. His sister Betta, who was plain, shy, and aristocratic, spent her time in trying to fit the ways of her father and her brother into the puzzle of daily life.

Below the village lay the hamlet of Rushbrook Mills, where was situated the

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very picturesque Rushbrook House. Here lived Mr. Josiah Kestell, his wife, and two daughters. He had bought the place from Mr. Eagle Bennison, the Squire, who owned miles of the forest land, which, though beautiful, was not exactly productive, so that the large sum offered to him by "Kestell of Greystone," as the lawyer had long been known, induced him to sell the old mill-house and a few acres of land, including the first of the pools, to the successful solicitor.

The Squire's own house was situated at the other end of the valley, and above the last of the pools. It was known as Court Garden, and was reached by a road that was parallel with the water, then, crossing an old bridge, ran between fir-wood and steep inclines up to the Squire's abode, from whence one looked down on the leafy maze below and far away to the northern ridge of forest before mentioned.

It was often a subject of discussion whether Rushbrook House, with its exquisite picturesqueness; its tall, grey-arched bridge, spanning the head of the valley and acting as a kind of drawbridge to the house; its beautiful pool in front, where the wild-fowl and the moorhens fluttered; its overhanging trees and all its other charms; surpassed the wider views and the larch and fir plantations of Court Garden.

Both houses were, so it appeared, far from the busy haunts of men, for there was a three-mile drive to Rushbrook Station, and then a ten-minutes train journey to Greystone, or, if one preferred it, a five-miles walk to Greystone, which boasted of being the county town of Southshire.

In winter, though the sandy roads never seemed muddy, the region could look very grand and desolate when storms swept over the great Beacon and rushed down to the valley, and when the roar of the voices of the winds among the huge firs added the charm of the awful and the terrible to this favoured spot.

Perhaps it is not enough realised how much the things we look at in our childhood help to mould our characters. Certainly something of the beauty and the honest waywardness of the nature around her had helped to form Elva Kestell's moods. She had come to Rushwood House when quite a child, and she could well remember how she had led her younger sister Amice many a journey of exploration, rejecting the escort of nurse or governess. Mrs. Kestell was an invalid and Mr. Kestell was but little at home, and, moreover, a most indulgent father, so the two girls had, as it were, formed their own characters and strengthened their own inclinations, till now that they were grown into the come-out-young-lady age they were themselves, and not artificial girls; but so dissimilar were they that it would have been difficult to believe their close relationship. One, and one thing only, they equally possessed—a passionate love for their home, and for the beautiful nature that surrounded them. In Elva it came out in that passion of life—if one may use the expression—that determined associating of the mental with the physical existence, and that fitfulness of purpose which the winds of heaven apparently possess. But with Amice it was quite different. The still, deep, shrinking character seemed to understand the mysteries of the hidden world in a way in which very few have learnt to understand them, and which those few have seldom disclosed, preferring to carry their curious link with them to the grave than to expound it, perhaps being quite unable to tell us what hidden sympathy has connected them with the physical world.

This evening there were no wayward winds, however, and an exquisite moonlight haze seemed to envelope Rushbrook House with kindly softness; the trees were all painted in a dark-grey wash, and in the stillness of the early September evening not a leaf seemed to stir.

The shutters were not yet closed, and lights twinkled here and there in apparently magnified splendour. In one window, any person standing on the old, ivy-covered bridge would have noticed the outline of a girl crossing and recrossing the light within.

Elva Kestell was dressing for a dinner-party, but all at once she paused in this usually important occupation, and, sitting down by the side of her dressing-table, she thrust her well-shaped hands into a thick mass of wavy hair, and, with an impatient gesture, read for the third time a paragraph on one page of "The Current Reader."

Yet she knew the words almost by heart, and they seemed engraved on her brain with the exactness of an inscription on a piece of presentation plate:

"We have seldom read a book which so utterly failed in its purpose as does 'An Undine of To-day,' by Isidore Kent. That the author had, when she wrote this novel, praiseworthy intentions, we can scarcely doubt, when we have waded

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through her work; and we purposely say 'she,' for no masculine disguise could hide the sex of the writer whose purpose—always supposing she had one—has been to show that the apparently soulless being, whom we call a young lady in society, can be endowed with thought and feeling, if only some good man will take her in hand by the usual method of matrimony. But even this idea is undefined, and we are led to doubt not only whether the hero himself has a soul, but whether, if he has one, he would be capable of dividing it into two equal parts with his Undine. We shall not take away the little interest the book possesses by divulging the plot, but we must protest against Isidore Kent's false ideas of honour. She pours her vials of wrath upon her hero, who very naturally fights shy of a young lady whose relations were decidedly shady. We, on the other hand, would congratulate him on his narrow escape.

"It is a pity such novels as 'An Undine of To-day' find publishers, for they neither enrich literature nor the minds of those who read them. HOEL FENNER."

Elva Kestell, having again reached the end of the notice, pushed back her chair, and said aloud:

"Hoel Fenner, I hate him! What a horrid, cruel review, and he has purposely misunderstood me."

Then she walked to her bookshelf and took down a volume bound in sky-blue cloth, and upon which one could read in gold letters, "An Undine of To-day, by Isidore Kent."

"One good thing is," she continued, mentally, "that no one but papa, mamma, and Amice know that I am Isidore Kent, and they will not tell, I made them promise. But I never thought a man could be so cruel as to publish such words. I will never, never write again—never; and yet I had something to say——all the same, I hate Hoel Fenner, and I wish I could tell him so."

A knock at the door made Elva put back her volume hastily, and remember that she was not ready, which fact the maid who entered saw to her dismay, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Miss Elva, the carriage will be round in five minutes, and Mr. Kestell is already downstairs."

"Well, make haste, Symee; this velvet dress is soon put on. It was too bad of Miss Amice to refuse to go; she was asked. Where's my fan?—quick, Symee, and the row of pearls."

"If you will sit down, Miss Elva, I will put this flower in your hair; it makes you look so nice," added Symee, in such a sweet, lady-like voice, that a stranger would at once have been struck by it. The truth was, Symee had been at Rushbrook House ever since her childhood, and many a game had she shared with her young mistresses.

Symee never forgot that Mr. Kestell had saved her and her brother from the workhouse, and she tried to repay her benefactor by an untiring devotion to his wife and daughters, which devotion they fully appreciated, and treated Symee more as a friend than a servant.

The five minutes were past before Elva managed to finish her toilet; and at this moment the door softly opened, and Amice Kestell stood on the threshold, looking more like some visitant from another world than the sister of such an altogether radiant person as Elva. Amice's face was perfectly colourless; so much so, that she appeared to be carved out of marble, except for the blue eyes that possessed a strange, far-off expression in them, whilst she had a curious habit of clasping her hands straight in front of her when she spoke. Even now, though Amice had come to say something, it was Elva who spoke first:

"Don't fuss, Amice dear; I shall be ready in two minutes."

Amice was dressed in plain white serge, high at the neck; and, thus attired, she contrasted curiously with her sister in her dark-blue velvet gown, cut square on her bosom, with the row of pearls round her slender throat, and the warm, rich colouring of her face. In a tableau the sisters would have made a good representation of Life and Death.

"Papa will be angry if you keep him waiting," said Amice, nervously. "I am glad I am not going."

"How ridiculous you are, Amice; papa angry, indeed! Why, he never is out of temper, is he, Symee? You are always saying things like that; it is not fair and just to papa."

Even in this speech the impulsive generosity of Elva was visible. She was devoted to her father, and was ready to stand up for him, even though she knew her tone would hurt the feelings of her sister.

"I never should say that to a stranger," said Amice, in a voice full of contrition; but certainly it was not Elva who frightened

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her, for she stood gazing with undisguised admiration at her as she hurried hither and thither.

"There, I am ready; do I look nice, Amice?"

"Yes, you look beautiful," said Amice; "and oh, dear Elva, it was good of you to take my place."

"Good of me! You know I like society; only mamma is so upset by your hermit-like ideas. What shall I say to Mrs. Eagle Bennison to excuse your absence? Poor Symee, you will have something to do to clear my things away."

"Oh, come quickly, Elva; I hear papa calling you," said Amice, seizing her sister's hand.

The two went down the oak staircase together, hand in hand, and Mr. Kestell, who was standing below in the hall, saw them plainly as they approached, whilst the lamplight fell full on his white head; and Elva noted with a smile how handsome and how kind was the much-loved face of her father.

Mr. Kestell was of average height; but a slight stoop made him appear a little shorter than he was. His head was well-shaped, and of fine proportions; he wore his white hair just touching his coat-collar, and he had once been likened by an enthusiastic and musical lady to "that dear sweet old Liszt." And certainly there was a slight likeness between the well-known genius and Mr. Kestell, the much-respected solicitor of Greystone, whose benevolent look and clear blue eyes were known to inspire confidence in any one who had business dealings with him. At this moment the smile that lit up his face as he watched Elva coming down was quite reassuring. A man who smiles is not likely to be unduly severe, even if his horses have been kept waiting a few minutes.

"Eh, Miss Elva, five minutes late by the clock; and how often have I said the horses are not to be kept waiting by you girls? Come, make haste."

"Forgive me, father mine," said Elva, with a wonderfully bright look. "Now, don't forget your manners, but give me your arm properly, and hand a lady into her carriage in the most approved fashion. I should have been longer if Amice and Symee had not helped me."

Elva's words were full of affection, and the tone was that of a girl who knew she was loved and spoilt. As Mr. Kestell hurried across the hall, he involuntarily glanced towards the white figure that stood so motionless at the foot of the stairs, and, slightly turning his head, he said:

"That was kind of you, Amice. Good night, my dear; you will be asleep when we come back. Take care of your mother."

Amice's white lips moved, but if she said anything it was inaudible to the two, who were quickly shut into the brougham by the help of the footman and butler. Amice waited till the sound of the wheels could no longer be heard, and then she walked to the morning-room, where Mrs. Kestell was sitting.

At a glance one could see that the wife of the rich solicitor was delicate, but it was the delicacy of a woman who has all her life been too much considered. No doctor could ever give a name to her illness, though one London physician, more truthful than wise, had said that there would be nothing the matter with Mrs. Kestell if she were a poor woman and had to earn her own living.

"So they are gone," she remarked to Amice, who sat down near her mother and shivered a little as if the room were cold, instead of being much too warm. "Why did not Elva come in?"

"She was late, and papa was—annoyed at being kept waiting."

"Was he? That is strange; he did not seem to mind when he was in here. Elva will coax him round. I wish, Amice, you were more like her, and that you would try to get over your eccentricities. You won't go into society, and even all the money that has been spent on your voice is thrown away, as you will sing so seldom."

Mrs. Kestell called Amice eccentric, and yet it was difficult to define in what way she was so, except in her shyness. Otherwise, if anything had to be done of a disagreeable nature, it was to Amice the household appealed.

There was but one very defined, strong feeling which Amice allowed others to see in her, and this was her love for her sister, and even this Mrs. Kestell did not altogether approve of.

"You know, mamma, that society does not appreciate the songs I care to sing."

"What nonsense! Elva's voice is not to be compared with yours, and yet she—— I do believe you would be more like other girls if you did not continually shelter yourself behind her."

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Amice did not answer this rebuke, but presently opened a book and read aloud till her mother dozed.

It might almost be said that Mrs. Kestell had dozed through life ever since her marriage with Josiah Kestell. He was a gentleman by birth, and had succeeded to a good solicitor's business at Greystone, and this business he had trebled by luck and hard work. Now, however, he took life more easily, leaving the hard work to his partner, Edward Hope, a cousin of his wife. Mr. Kestell was known to be very rich, having a property on which, some twenty-three years before, valuable mines had been discovered and worked with extraordinary success. The two Miss Kestells were therefore known to be endowed with much of this world's goods, and now that they were come out there was some speculation as to their future husbands, and, though it is unpoetical to mention the fact, several elderly men who looked upon Mr. Kestell as their most trusted friend, had deeply considered whether they could not improve their fortunes by offering themselves as his sons-in-law.

Mrs. Kestell was of a very good family. She was the third daughter of Sir Arthur Ovenden, whose acres were few, whose pedigree was long, whose debts were many, and whose pride was unlimited. But man must live, and so must his daughters, and when Celia Ovenden was wooed by Josiah Kestell, gentleman, and solicitor of Greystone, Sir Arthur, knowing that if he died suddenly his girls' portions would be extremely small, accepted Mr. Kestell's offer with as good a grace as the owner of so many noble ancestors could muster, though at the same time telling Josiah Kestell that he formerly had views of his daughter Celia marrying a rich man.

"I shall be rich," was Josiah's answer. "I have an excellent business at Greystone, and I will double it. I promise you that your daughter shall live as she has been accustomed to live."

Sir Arthur gave in with a great show of reluctance, though the truth was, that Celia became at once better off than she had been in the parental household. Since then, her husband had so well kept his promise that the after-dinner theme of poor men was Kestell of Greystone's fortune. There had not only been hard work to account for it—though that had not been wanting—but there had also been luck in his mining operations, and, as money has a curious affinity with its own kind, money had made money, had doubled money, had coined money, so that Mrs. Kestell could now patronise the elder sisters who had said slighting things about Celia's marrying only a solicitor.

Besides money, Mrs. Kestell had a devoted husband. For her sake he had bought Rushbrook House; for her sake he cultivated society, and entertained as much as was possible; and he seemed well rewarded for his trouble if she sometimes expressed a sleepy pleasure at her possessions, or made the rare exertion to go to a dinner-party. But now the girls were grown up, and it seemed very unlikely that Mrs. Kestell would ever again exert herself to go about with her husband.

When Amice and her mother had dined, the former again read aloud, for Mrs. Kestell liked to listen to the musical murmur of her daughter's voice; but the "Life of Sister Dora" was far beyond the comprehension of Celia Kestell, and before ten o'clock she said she would go to bed.

"And pray, dear Amice, don't sit up reading; it makes you more eccentric. Go to bed, and try and get a little colour in your cheeks. Undressing at night is a great trouble; but I must say that Symee is very quick and handy. What a blessing your father's kindness has turned out for us! I'm sure one would often do kind things if one could look forward and see how it answers in the end."

The bell was rung. A footman lit the candle and opened the doors; the housekeeper came to suggest some new dainty to put by the invalid's bedside; Symee met her mistress on the stairs. Thus, with the help of three persons, Mrs. Kestell retired to bed.

Left alone in the sitting-room, with its shaded lamps and its luxurious chairs, Amice Kestell breathed a little sigh of relief. She went to the window, and, drawing back the curtain, she gazed out at the beautiful moonlit bridge, the pool, and the great Beacon in the distance. She could catch the light in the Observatory and in some few smaller houses, as if the stars had fallen upon earth; but the beauty of the scene did not seem to impress any look of joy on the marble-like face. On the contrary, it seemed a little to irritate her, and, dropping the heavy folds, Amice began slowly pacing the sitting-room with clasped hands and her head a little

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thrown back, apparently quite lost to the riches and comforts which surrounded her.

"Sister Dora was a grand woman," she said, talking to herself; "but I prefer Catherine of Sienna. If only one could be like her! Oh, why is it impossible? Why do things about one seem to tie one down with unbreakable chains? It is so difficult, so difficult; and what is right? How much of the world can one renounce? Here they are angry with me. Mamma wants me to love society, and papa—only Elva has pity on me. My dear, dear sister—but she cannot understand—she is better than I am, and all this gold does not hurt her. It is gold, gold that is eating away one's life. How can I get rid of it? But they say I am wrong, that this feeling is merely self-will and pride. Is it true, O Heaven? Tell me, and let me know the truth."

So strong was the girl's distress that she paused suddenly, and kneeling down on the floor, hid her face in her hands in mute and tearless agony.

That undefinable mystery, a young wrestling soul full of the realisation of its own life and its own hopes and fears, its own struggles and attempts at soaring above its surroundings, has been over and over again presented to the world; and the world, not being able to understand the phenomenon, gives to it various gently sarcastic names, such as self-deception, spiritual pride, and wilful ignorance, or, if driven to stronger language, sums it all up in the term "superstitious folly." No wonder that many—and Amice was one of these—shrink with overpowering fear from asking for help from those who pretend to answer all riddles; and, instead of begging for sympathy, suffer agonies of mental tortures in trying to make the spiritual and the physical life join hands.

Amice took no account of time as she knelt on, till suddenly a slight shiver passed through her, and, rising hastily, she walked upstairs.

As she ascended the low, broad steps, lighted by a large window, the branches of an old yew-tree were shaken by the night wind; and it seemed as if some bony fingers had knocked at the window and signalled to Amice to come out; but she heeded nothing, only walked on till she reached a small door at the end of a long, uncarpeted passage at the top of the house. Here she paused, and knocked softly. A faint voice said, "Come in;" and Amice entered, to find her maid Symee lying down on her bed in a bare little room, where only the moon gave a fitful light.

Symee was fully dressed, and only covered up with a shawl; but surprise caused her to sit up for a moment as her young mistress said:

"Symee, your head is bad; undress and go to bed. Don't sit up for Miss Elva; I will help her when she comes in."

At the same time Amice put a cool, soft hand on the maid's forehead, which sent a momentary delicious relief from pain to the aching brow.

"Miss Amice, how kind you are! How did you know I had a headache? But I must sit up."

"No, you must go to bed. Make haste; I will come back when you are undressed."

Amice walked softly out of the room, and went to the end of the passage, where a window looked out on to the sloping lawns and hanging woods of Rushbrook House.

"I must hide it," she thought. "I dare not tell any one. Is it a gift, or——" She shivered a little. "What am I saying? That I will not have what God gives me. How can I be so wicked? Surely we are children in God's hands, and yet have we free will. How can both things be possible? How are we to guide ourselves, and yet be guided by God?"

This puzzling thought filled the girl's mind till she returned to her maid, whom she found in bed, but hardly able to bear the terrible pain in her head.

"Miss Amice, please put your hand on my head again," she moaned, "it is so cool."

"I will," said Amice; and kneeling down on the bare boards, she once more placed her soft, cool hand on Symee's head. And had any one been present they would have seen her white figure lit up with dancing moonbeams, which, as they now and then touched her pale face, showed that her lips were moving.

After a short silence Symee spoke.

"Oh, Miss Amice, it seems like a miracle. The pain is going; thank you so very much. I feel sleepy; and yet I thought just now I should be awake all night."

"Hush!" said Amice; and when, after a little while, she rose from her knees, Symee was sleeping as quietly as a tired child after a day's pleasure.

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THE LIFE MONASTIC.

LIKE all sober, honest persons who have a strong, wholesome horror of romance, Herr Bædeker, the author — it does not matter if he is the proprietor, instead of wholly the author—of a number of remarkable books, is now and then as amusing as the man who arranges his life for the entertainment exclusively of his fellow beings. I believe it is possible to laugh over the publications of the Statistical Society. Bædeker is nearly as matter-of-fact as this honourable society; and, therefore, nearly as grave. But when I chance, in one or other of the clever Teuton's handbooks, to come upon an exact and methodical description of the route to the summit of a mountain with such a cheering appendix as "a hermit at the top," for the enlivenment of the spirits of the weary tourist, I feel disposed to clap Herr Bædeker on his broad back, and to counsel him straightway to change his vocation, and become a contributor to "Punch."

No doubt, however, this sort of humour is thoroughly unconscious. It would be very tame if it were not. To Herr Bædeker, the spectacle of a man, with faculties and aspirations more or less like his own, residing all the year round on a mountain-top for a reason, or for reasons that do not commend themselves to the intelligence, is less humorous than noteworthy. And it is noteworthy only because the ladies and gentlemen who never leave their hearths unaccompanied by Bædekers and opera-glasses, will, for gross reasons of the flesh, be glad to know that when their toil of a day is at an end, they will be greeted among the clouds by a human being of like passions with themselves, who will, perhaps, have some nice, cool wine in his cellar hewn in the rocks. To Herr Bædeker, and to the average tourist, there is nothing extremely odd in the fact that in the nineteenth century there should be found men willing to live a life of seclusion and, let us hope, asceticism, upon sites so elevated that the idea of them alone would perchance have frozen the blood of Saint Simeon Stylites, whose column was but a few dozen feet above the soil in which it was fixed.

A hermit of this kind cannot really be termed a legitimate hermit. His life is not by any means wholly consecrated to reflection upon his innate depravity. In the season, if not all through the year, he has much diversion in the visitors who ascend to see him, and the sunrise or the sunset. These visitors at first look at him as if he were a native of the moon. But when they find that he is human, in spite of his preposterously long beard and nebulous dwelling-place, they thaw towards him, and, for an hour or two, treat him with cordiality, and even distinction. The odds are, that a luncheon-basket has climbed to the hermitage with the travellers. In this case, of course, the hermit relaxes his self-imposed discipline. He puts the wine in his own icy well until it is wanted. Plates, tumblers, and so forth, he provides from his chambers in the rock. And, at length, when appetite is ripe, he sits with his visitors, and eats a hearty and luxurious meal. Perhaps, no sooner is one party done with, and one luncheon-basket emptied, than a second party and a second basket appear on his horizon.

What—to a man with digestive organs beyond suspicion, as the hermit's are sure to be—could be more pleasurable than this? And so, at close of day, when the sun has set for a naughty world, and only the mountain-top and the hermit are illumined by its rosy beams, the hermit may be supposed to sing his vesper hymn with true convictions of contentment; and duly retire to his frigid but healthful couch to sleep calmly through the hours of the night. He knows no care; and the morrow will but repeat the joys of to-day.

I have talked with such a solitary, while the mountain mist eddied about us, and the wind whistled against his rocks. This hermit was of no order of Churchmen. He was not even under vows to say so many "Ave Marias" an hour or daily during his career as hermit. But he was a strong, hearty, bronzed man who declared that he found much satisfaction in sounding the bell of the little church which adjoined his dwelling. This he did twice or thrice a day—at noon, and I believe also at sunrise and sunset. The villagers a mile or two below him hear his bell, and heart goes forth to meet heart, though hands are not long enough to reach his hand as he tolls forth the hour.

To me the man's life seemed the perfection of idleness. He was illiterate. I asked if he read books, but the only book he could show was a tattered volume in which jocose visitors inscribed jocose verses about their host. To be sure he

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was something of an agriculturist. But his little garden patch was not at all times available for spade and shovel, and it was too small to occupy a tithe of his natural energies. It remained for me to suppose that he sat through most of the minutes of his dull life, conjecturing when the sun shall arise, when it shall set, and when it is time to ring the midday bell. In the little church dedicated to Saint Nicolas which, like his dwelling, was hewn from the mountain-top, was a square vault-stone. Beneath this stone lay, in a neatly chiselled hole, the bones and dust of divers generations of hermits, my friend's predecessors. These relics were his constant companions, and the only companions who were constantly with him. But their mouldering bodies were nothing to our hermit. He did not even regard them with conventional reverence. And he was openly gleeful because, by a modern law of the land, which forbad burial within the walls of a church except in very special cases, he himself had not to anticipate a final home on the top of the débris of his lonely predecessors.

This reminds me of another spectacle, edifying or not according to your humour, which may be seen in Rome any day upon payment of a few coppers. Here also we have a fine commentary upon the life monastic. It is in the vaults underneath the Capuchin Monastery by the palace of the Barberini family. A gaunt old Capuchin, with a merry eye, and a well-disciplined mind, acts as cicerone to the visitors. If you ask him whether the sight you are going to see is so very appalling, he will smile upon you with much benevolence and some pity, and perhaps reply: "Why should it frighten any one? We are but dust and ashes from the beginning. It is well to know it." But this excellent counsel, an unconscious larceny from the philosophy of the Grecian sage, is not so acceptable to all his visitors as time and the vacuity of his own life have made it for himself.

You descend a few steps, a door is opened, and before you is a suite of five rooms, admirably decorated in arabesque. But the decorations are not the work of an upholsterer or a long-dead artist to whom, with the flight of centuries, a phantom of fame has come. They are the laboured work of the Capuchins themselves. And the material they have used is nothing in the world else but the bones of their departed comrades.

It is as grim a show as the world holds. Each of the five chambers is carpeted to the depth of a few feet, with brown, dry soil, brought in ships from the Holy Land. Herein, almost in view from above, lay for a time each monk after his death. Then he was exhumed, and his skeleton carefully broken up into serviceable portions. Even so, when a palace has outlived its occupants, the buyer of old bricks and beams secures it at auction, and, with pick and chisel, takes it to pieces, and makes other use of the fragments.

But not all the dead monks were privileged to be resolved into parts that may be said to be without individuality. Some of them had defied the grave and the soil of Palestine so amazingly, that the idea struck upon the superiors of the Monastery to set up these admirable mummies of Christianity, clad in their grave-clothes, to serve as a lesson to their living brethren. And so thus they stand, grinning at the stranger from under their brown woollen cowls, and ticketed with the date of their demise.

My guide through this dolorous entertainment had been on intimate terms with Brother A——, who had died in 1861, and who now stood, stiff, ugly, and still, gazing at us with sightless eyes. "Yes, he is as natural as the rest," he remarks with his unvarying smile, when I comment upon the condition of his friend.

One would like to fancy that he has sorrowed by the side of his dead comrade upon more suitable occasions. But, to tell the truth, it is probable he has never shed a tear in his life. It is in the nature of the life monastic. Sympathy, in its common human form, does not exist within convent walls. Such sympathy as a monk may cherish in his heart is an exotic sympathy, out of touch with the hearts of those who live in the world of which they are an active and actual part. The monk has done with the world.

For my part, I would as soon confide the woes and griefs of my soul to a stone image as to a monk. His condolences are of too stereotyped an order to suit those who require genuine and discriminating solace. One feels that he will carry the same face, the same sympathy, and the same methodical benediction to his next patient. There is too much of the immutability of the sphinx about him, too little of the man.

Reflection shows us that it must be so. A man is not made more of a man by

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the curtailment of the sum of interests which touch his mind. On the contrary: it is with human beings as with those fallen members of the vegetable and animal world who have allowed certain of their natural faculties to glide into disuse. This neglect does not kill them, any more than his abstention from most of the pleasures and responsibilities of existence puts an end to the monk. But, as surely as the progress of time, it degrades them.

The vegetable which has shirked this or that function of life, because it was a little irksome, pays the penalty. Its fellow vegetables, who have honestly responded to all the calls which Nature has made upon them, look down upon it as a debased vegetable. And similarly with the monk. He, no less than the vegetable, pays the penalty for his evasion of those bracing cares and anxieties of life which are to our faculties like oil to machinery. He may state the case how he pleases towards his own intelligence. No doubt he will readily be able to convince himself that he is doing his duty by himself.

But the monk now and then realises, with sharp sorrow of soul, that his gain is hardly commensurate with his loss. The men of the world whom he presumes to tax with iniquity, because they are more active than himself, are, as a rule, indulgent enough towards him. It does not matter whether their indulgence is the outcome of contempt or a sincere spirit of universal tolerance. But it is not always so. And when it does happen that a pitched battle between the two classes takes place, then the monk learns how he has erred, and how seriously his eyesight is affected by his habit of going blindfold through the highways of life.

That is a solid saying which the Duke of Wellington is reported to have uttered about the worth of public opinion as an educative agent: "You will never have confidence in yourself until you see others have confidence in you." There is much in it. Indeed, it would little profit a man to have the utmost confidence in himself if other men put no confidence in him. It takes two to make a confidence; and only the best controlled of philosophers may find pleasure in the self-assurance that everything he does is well done, if at the same time the rest of the world looks askance at him, as at a person little to be trusted.

Now the monk is in a position that makes this discipline of confidence impossible. He may have the most admirable abilities, abilities which burn for recognition; but they must remain latent. And though originally adapted to excite the largest amount of the world's confidence, he is to his death-day an unknown quantity. The best he can do for himself is to stifle his genius. He takes a soporific, and exclaims: "Behold, how well I sleep!"

But I fancy the life monastic stands most strongly condemned in its effect upon the minds of those who devote themselves to it. They make a solitude around themselves and call that solitude peace. How incredibly false is this nomenclature none but monks themselves may tell. But the writings of a hundred cloistered solitaries, who were supposed to have coerced themselves into a state of tranquil beatitude, sufficiently tell the story, without direct confession of mouths. What passion and yearning one finds in these books! What extravagance, what rant! As a rule, there is little indeed of the calm of the Quietists in the minds of those in cloistered cell.

And yet the wonder is that this obvious effect of monastic life was never foreseen at the outset of monastic foundations; or, if seen, that the deduction was not esteemed strong enough to stifle in their birth all such establishments. It is surely more true that "laborare est orare," than that "orare est laborare." Honest employment, inasmuch as it is the best occupation for mind and body, is, methinks, the most acceptable of oraisons. The man who spends five hundred hours in building a house for others, is really more respectable than the man who passes five hundred hours upon his knees in prayer for his own amelioration. Work itself is an ameliorative agent, the value of which can hardly be over-estimated. On the other hand, excessive prayer may, without irreverence, be termed a spiritual debauch, which enfeebles, instead of invigorating the mind. Fanaticism may readily be, as it has often been, the outcome of this loss of mental balance. And thus the worst of crimes are wrought as the direct offspring of the defects of the monastic life unalloyed.

Even at the best the monastic life is a life of stagnation. Even when there is judicious discipline, and no lack of employment in making liqueurs, like the Chartreuse and the Benedictine, in making boots and shoes, spudding vines, or crushing grapes, the monk is not more than half a man. He is, to the rest of us,

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mainly but a child—a creature with the body of an adult, and the mind of a boy. The monks of Greece, including the residents on Mount Athos, are so ignorant of the most ordinary facts that they would not be in the least surprised to be told that another continent had been discovered. I will go farther, and say that Brother Chrysostom or Elias of Athos would hesitate ere attempting to confute you if you ventured to assert that they had come motherless into the world. Of womankind, indeed, they know nothing. Their gorgeous pictures and mosaics of the Virgin in blue and gold are their only public recognition of the existence of a sex which their rules compel them to treat with the most contemptuous and chilling neglect.

It is odd to consider how, in our own day, there is a revival of the monkish spirit—in Protestant England, too, which so long ago levelled her monasteries as intolerable things. A monk in England, moreover, is happier far than a monk in Catholic Italy. We do not revile him. We do not threaten him with spoliation of what trivial personal effects he has, or issue decrees annexing the estate of his establishment. He swings his skirts and his rosary in our lanes with a solid tread of ease, and excites such awe and reverence in our cherry-cheeked country damsels, as an angel from Heaven might evoke from them. Our artists from town hasten to sketch him. Ploughboys call him "your reverence," or by the dulcet and venerable title of "Father." And even those wasps of the age, the journalists, since they are not personally aggrieved by his existence, are prone to say good things about him as the provider in one way or another of items of copy which are susceptible of picturesque elaboration, and which call forth into light untried powers of argument and new-born allusions. And so Brother Clement is content. His establishment is wealthy. The most famous of modern British architects has designed the building, which bristles with gargoyles grim and long. In its list of patrons are the names of exalted persons, and of sympathetic ladies of rank. The latter confess to Brother Clement, and humbly kiss his hand in token of their submission to him as their spiritual father. He lives in the midst of delightful natural scenery, and breathes the purest air. The rules of the monastery allow a certain amount of society. This, at his pleasure, he can alternate with studious solitude, books of a tranquillising kind, and devotional exercises in a church that, for its æsthetic beauty and choice materials, is the wonder of three counties. He lives apart from the sin of cities. Perhaps, once a year, he is summoned to preach a course of stirring sermons in the metropolis. The task is not unpleasing. Though he has forsworn fame as one of the vanities of life, his sermons make him famous. And long ere the work becomes tedious to him, it is ended, and he has returned to the monastic nest to receive the commendation of his superiors, and the congratulations of those of his brethren who do not envy him.

"All we ask is to be left in peace—with our properties." Such was the plaintive wail to me, the other day, of a monk in Italy. He was a forlorn remnant of a rich establishment, situated on a romantic mountain-top. The monastery had been rich; but the Government had despoiled it. Of old, there were forty monks in it. Its lands stretched for miles in two directions from the hill. The bell of its chapel sounded daily over the plain. Daily, also, pilgrims, who revered the bald-headed fathers, climbed the tiresome cliff, and put money in the alms-boxes. "We were rich," said the monk; "and our wine was bought in Rome at a high price."

But these happy days are at an end. The conventual estates have been sold by the Government to a speculator, who has raised walls against the monastery, and makes its inmates pay for the water they draw from the very well their predecessors had sunk.

It is curious, as I have said, that the state of affairs in a Protestant and a Catholic country should be, respectively, what it is. But, in effect, there is not much difference between the life monastic in England and Italy. If the one may sufficiently be justified, so also may the other.

PROVERB.

"A WATCHED pot never boils," the old wives say;
Though Love himself to stir the embers strive,
Though Hope with laughing lips does all she may
To keep the fitful flickering flame alive.

Though Passion rouses with his fervid breath
A little glow, he wearies, and it dies,
And the heaped coals grow grey and chill beneath
The piteous pleading of Faith's wistful eyes.

Nay, Wisdom whispers, seek for other fare,
Nor waste life's summer in such useless toils;
In vain, the fond Trust, wrapped in love and prayer,
Sits by the hearth—"the watched pot never boils."

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THE END OF THE STORY.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was a little white cottage with a green door and a garden in front full of holly-hocks, wall-flowers, Canterbury bells, and all sorts of old-fashioned flowers; screened from the public gaze by a thick privet hedge, but over the top of which the inquisitive passer-by might still, at times, catch a glimpse of Miss Priscilla Pritchett, in an appalling sun-bonnet and prodigious wash-leather gloves, engaged in gardening operations and waging war against all caterpillars and other horticultural depredators.

The crossest old maid in the village—or out of it—so people said, and the ugliest too, said the boys who made raids upon her apple-trees, purloined her cherries, and chivied her poultry. And yet there were one or two sober-minded, middle-aged folk who declared that they remembered a time when Miss Priscilla was a young and pretty girl, who wouldn't have said "boh!" to a goose, much less have threatened to take the law of Jim Andrews for throwing stones at her cat—and he the only son of Widow Andrews, who every one knew was as decent and hard-working a woman as ever kept body and soul together by going out washing and keeping a little shop. But these same worthy people were wont to add, with a shake of the head, for the benefit of those unbelievers to whom the idea of Miss Pritchett ever having been otherwise than the grim, gaunt, and aggressive female they now knew, seemed fabulous and incredible: "Ah, that was before Dick Merton went wrong and jilted her, with the wedding-day fixed and all!"

Young and pretty! Ah, well, she was old and ugly enough now, and that was all that the rising generation cared. They saw no pathos in the sharp, bony features; nor the light of a long-gone-by love story in those keen, remorseless eyes, always on the alert, and keeping a sharp look-out for opportunities to pounce upon, and salute with a cuff or a shake, those youthful depredators and juvenile offenders by whom she was held in such peculiar abhorrence. And to imagine for an instant that those shrill, rasping tones had ever fallen in sweet and dulcet melody upon the ear of, at least, one individual, was a thing, the mere supposition of which involuntarily caused the nose of the sceptical to elevate itself in scorn. Miss Priscilla Pritchett was an old maid—must have been born in that capacity, and would infallibly continue in the same to the end of the chapter.

And, truth to tell, she was not a prepossessing object as she stood, a grim, motionless figure, between the rows of tall hollyhocks and trim lavender bushes which lined the path leading to her tiny cottage. Tall and gaunt, with scant wiry hair dragged away from her seamed and weather-beaten features, and screwed up behind into what resembled a ball of grey worsted—there, with everything round her as fresh and green as she was worn and grizzled, as she stood, brandishing in one hand a pair of large gardening scissors, with defiance and contempt towards mankind generally expressive in her very attitude, she presented an unclassical, but not unfaithful, representation of that eldest of the three fates, Atropos by name, who is represented as holding the fatal shears with which to cut the thread of human life. For on that day of all days did Miss Priscilla hold herself aggrieved and indignant, and was consequently in a frame of mind which might well have made the boldest boy who ever coveted his neighbour's apple-tree, shudder.

For had not she that very morning, while arrayed in her full panoply of sun-bonnet, leather gloves, and coarse working apron, been stared at over her own hedge by a man—a member of that vile and abominable sex, whose ways were the ways of deceitfulness, and whose ultimate end was perdition! A man—and what was more, a disreputable man—though in Miss Pritchett's eyes they were all more or less disreputable (generally more). But this was the out-at-elbows, ragged, and foot-sore disreputableness; in fact, it was a tramp, and one whose fortunes were—to judge by his outer man—at their lowest and most poverty-stricken ebb, who had thus dared to desecrate by his impertinent gaze the sanctity of those precincts, within whose boundaries no masculine and contaminating foot was allowed to tread. That little white gate was kept latched alike in the face of parson, provision merchant, or tax collector. The butcher or baker might hand their wares over the uncompromising portal, but woe betide them, or any one who, on his own responsibility, dared to cross that virgin threshold. The postman, when he came at all—which was not more frequently than twice or thrice in the year

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—stuck his missive in the hedge and decamped, after ringing the bell.

In fact, only those ribald boys before mentioned, to whom that gate was as the gate of Paradise, by reason of the rosy-cheeked apples and juicy cherries which hung ripening within, out of their reach, had dared to invade that chaste and solitary domain. And even they—after the terrible fate of that youthful malefactor, Tim Rawlings, who, scared at the sudden and awful apparition of Miss Priscilla in a nightcap, had fallen out of the tree and broken his leg—had fought shy of that jealous enclosure, and shunned all possible contact with its lonely tenant, as they would have avoided the plague.

But to return to the tramp, whose reprehensible conduct had awakened such wrath and—though she would have contradicted it flatly with her last breath—such uneasiness in Miss Priscilla's breast. A ragged, dusty, grey, disreputable, and worn-out old tramp! A man who might have been fifty or so, but whose feeble frame might also have been bent by the weight of an additional score of years! And there he stood, as Miss Priscilla observed on raising herself from her occupation of weeding her narrow gravel path, and making it in all respects what a gravel path should be—for every one knows that this is an employment which requires a considerable amount of back-straightening from time to time, especially when there is a tendency to rheumatism, and we are not so young as we have been. Judge, then, her righteous indignation, when, on pausing from her toil, she beheld the head and shoulders of a man over her high privet hedge—the head having, by way of covering, the battered remnant of a wideawake, and the shoulders being clad in a coat, which was so old and ragged as to be of a particularly light and airy description, suitable to the time of the year, and proving to consist, on closer acquaintance, of a sleeve and a half, and miscellaneous assortment of patches.

Miss Pritchett was so amazed and disgusted at the indecency of his conduct, that at first she could do nothing but stare back at him, until finding her tongue—which was never mislaid for any length of time—she addressed him as a good-for-nothing vagabond, and bade him begone!

The man thus attacked—"As ill-looking a wretch as ever I saw!" soliloquised Miss Priscilla (and in one sense he certainly was)—touched his battered old hat with his forefinger, and made as though he would have spoken; but before he could open his lips, she let loose upon him such a flood of vituperation, and threatened him with such dire and dreadful penalties, if he dared to lay a finger on the tiniest twig, or asked for so much as a crust, that the wretched wayfarer drooped his weary old head, and, with a dreary shake of the bent shoulders, shambled off.

Miss Priscilla took the precaution, after thus effectually warning him off the premises, to see that he was not loitering anywhere in the neighbourhood, or lurking round a corner, with the foul intent of returning after dark and making a felonious entry. Then she saw, as he limped slowly along the white, dusty road, that he was followed at a little distance by a boy, a little, bare-footed lad, who wore the same weary, desolate look, and whose head drooped upon his shoulders in the same hopeless way as that of the man in whose footsteps he was treading.

Miss Priscilla looked after them both until they turned a corner of the road and disappeared from her sight. Then she snorted so portentously that her sun-bonnet fell off, and muttered to herself:

"A pretty pair, no doubt! I don't have no tramps hanging about my place, a-telling me they're starving, and not a bit of shoe-leather to their foot! Serve 'em right!"

And, so saying, she picked up her gardening implements, and stalking up the gravel path she had been so carefully weeding before the interruption came, entered the house and banged the door behind her, as though by so doing she would cut off all unpleasant thoughts, as well as communication with the outside world.

But it was quite in vain. There had been something in the abject misery and want, so plainly depicted in the man's face, which haunted her, something which came back again and again, as she tried to thrust it aside; and as she went about her small household duties there rose up continually before her the picture of those two, the man and the boy, as they took their weary way along the dusty road in the heat of the day. And he, the elder of the two, was an oldish man, she thought to herself indignantly. What did he mean by it, tramping about the country and worrying respectable folks who kept themselves to themselves and couldn't abide tramps?

And so the hours went by, until it was

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evening, and once more she was at work among her flowers, watering, and cutting away the dead leaves, and tending them carefully. More than once during this, her favourite employment, she found her thoughts wandering back resentfully to that good-for-nothing old tramp; and once she felt herself constrained to go to the gate, and standing there, gaze along the road round the corner of which those two unwelcome visitants had disappeared. Though why she did it, or what she expected to see there, she refused to acknowledge, even to herself.

"I'm an old fool;" she said at last, when it was getting so dusk that she could no longer distinguish leaf from bloom, and the water-can had been filled and emptied an indefinite number of times. "An old fool!" she repeated emphatically, as she pulled off her thick gardening-gloves and deposited the rake in its own particular corner. "And I don't care who says I ain't. Why, bless and save us, what's that?" Surely somebody was trying to open the gate! Somebody who was very small, and who rattled the latch ineffectually in his efforts to force an entrance. Seizing the rake again in one hand, as a protection against the bold marauder, whoever he might be, Miss Pritchett advanced with hasty steps and with a strange, unaccustomed feeling of what was almost like dread in her heart. Who could he be who dared——?

With fingers trembling with what might have been wrath, but what was curiously like agitation, she raised the latch, at the same time exclaiming in her gruffest and most uncompromising tones: "Who's that?"

Whoever it was had evidently found his courage fail him at the last moment, and was fleeing, as for his life, through the gathering gloom, and Miss Pritchett could tell by the soft thud of his feet on the dusty road, that he was bare-footed. Poor half-starved little wretch, faint and footsore as he was, a few score strides brought him within reach, and, being grasped by what might have been his collar—had he possessed such an appendage—he was hauled up sharp and dragged back again.

"Now then!" as soon as she had got her breath, "what do you mean by it, eh?" with a feint at knocking his head against the gate-post. "After my cherries, were you? Just let me catch you at it, will you!" with a shake that made his teeth rattle.

The miserable, scared little mortal tried to wriggle out of her hands; but she held him like a vice, though, at the same time, she was conscious of a tightening at her heart and a dread of something that was coming. Then, gathering up the remnants of his courage, the lad spoke in a quavering voice:

"Please, it was father——"

"What's that got to do with it?" exclaimed the outraged spinster. "Drat your father—and you too!"

The last as an after-thought; and then she shook him again, until he staggered, and would have fallen, but for the grip she had on him.

"Father's dying," he murmured brokenly, "and he sent me to give you this."

And, opening his ragged jacket, he pointed to a fragment of paper pinned inside for safety.

"A begging letter, I dare say. Take it away. I won't look at it. You ought to be in jail, you and your father too—a regular bad lot! Dying, indeed! What's that to me, I should like to know?"

But the boy, whose small, white face and famine-sharpened features filled her with a sense of vague discomfort, and seemed somehow like a little reproachful ghost conjured up from the past, repeated again, in dazed, weak tones:

"Father's dying. He says he can't go on no longer—he's dead beat, he is, and must give up—and I was to give you this."

The sense of tightness at her heart increased, and became as though a hand had been laid upon it and was clutching it in an iron grasp, as she read, by the light of the moon, the straggling, half-illegible words scrawled in pencil by a trembling hand, on the torn, crumpled paper:

"Pray come to me at Sharker's Rents and see me before I die.

"DICK MERTON."

There was a feeling as though everything was whirling round her, followed by another which seemed to tell her that she had known it all from the very first moment she had caught sight of those pinched and haggard features across the hedge, and watched the two figures plodding along the hard, dusty road, in the morning sunshine. Releasing, for the first time, her clutch of the boy's jacket, she put out her hand to support herself by the gate-post; and as she did so the captive fled for the second time, and urged on by panic and fear of falling again into those

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bony and remorseless hands, was almost instantly swallowed up in the dusk.

Miss Priscilla still stood there with one hand on the gate-post, and the other grasping the scrap of paper, motionless and oblivious, until at last, with a nervous shudder, and a sudden coming to herself, she turned and tottered slowly up the path, and re-entering the house, shut herself in with her memories of the past.

He was dying, and begged her to come to him before he died! She, the woman whom he had jilted and deceived, and made a byword and a laughing-stock! He, the man who had crushed her heart, and abandoned her for another within a week of the wedding-day, until she had turned against all mankind for his false sake! Was she to meekly and promptly obey the summons which this man had sent—who said he was dying, but who might only scoff at her, and hold her up to ridicule? Dying, was he? Let him die, and cumber the ground no longer! Then, in a tumult of rage and furious indignation as she thought of the traitor who had wrecked her life and left her, she seized a candle, and with hasty steps trod the steep staircase leading to the upper storey of her four-roomed cottage, where was the thing she sought. An ancient and ponderous oak chest, in a dark corner of an empty, unoccupied room, with a rusty key which turned so stiffly in the lock that she was obliged to set her candle beside her on the floor, and strive with both hands before she could unlock it. At last, with a creak and a harsh, grating sound, it gave way. A mouldy smell, as though years had passed since the lid had last been raised, and after that a fainter odour of dried lavender, or of some dead, fragrant herb, long gone to dust; then a white cloth, or what had once been white, but was now yellow and discoloured by the progress of time, and under that—an old-fashioned gown, short-waisted, and sprigged with rosebuds; and beside it a large and equally old-fashioned straw bonnet, trimmed with white ribbons, and with roses under the wide brim.

"My wedding-dress!" she muttered, with what was almost a sob, though strangled in its birth by fierce pride and scorn of her own weakness. She took them out and held them up to the light—that now strange-looking, scanty, befrilled garment, in whose folds the moths had held possession so long and undisturbed that the delicate fabric was eaten through and through in a hundred different places, while the bonnet-ribbons, on investigation, proved to be mottled with small round spots and splashes, as though tears had once been rained upon them before bonnet and gown had been hidden away those twenty years and more. "My wedding-gown!" she muttered; this time with an angry light in her eye, and a dull red flush on the sharp cheek-bones of that gaunt, grim face. "My wedding-gown! and he left me for the barmaid at the 'George and Dragon,' and ran away with her and his master's money! Let him die! I wouldn't raise my little finger to save him!"

Then, as she sat beside the open chest, she fell into a waking dream, in which she saw two figures—a young man and a girl—a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, happy-looking girl, walking together through the fields by the river-side at the close of a summer day, and one of them said: "Only a month to-morrow to the wedding-day." And there was no reply; but a bird overhead broke out into song, and the soft wind rustled the long grass by the brink of the river; and the two figures passing on side by side, melted into the golden haze of the setting sun; while another scene took the place of the first.

A cluster of deserted, ruinous hovels in a marshy, low-lying district, near to a stagnant pool, in one of which a worn-out tramp lay dying in the darkness, with no one near him but a little, half-starved lad, with perhaps one hard crust to be shared between the two; while the damp, unwholesome mist from without, creeping in through the gaping crevices in wall and roof, enveloped the chilly form lying on a heap of mouldy straw and refuse, like a pall.

"Will she never come?" he murmured, feebly, as he tossed restlessly on his wretched death-bed. "Not even when she knows I'm dying? Oh, she's hard, hard, cruel hard!"

The faint voice died away in long-drawn moans; the grey head fell back, and lay with wide-open, sightless eyes, staring upwards to where the stars twinkled down through the holes in the roof, and there was nothing heard but the stifled sobs of the little lad, as, with a cry of "Father! father! speak to me, father!" he flung himself upon the lifeless body.

"The Lord forgive me!" cried Miss Priscilla, five minutes later, as, with her bonnet pitched on anyhow, and her shawl all awry, she took her way at a breath-

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less pace along the dark, lonely, country road, and across the fields which intervened between her own tidy cottage and those desolate and deserted habitations known as "Sharker's Rents." Hastening along in a tumult of conflicting feeling, dreading lest she might be too late, hoping that her fears were vain, tumbling over the stones, and wiping her eyes on her bonnet-strings, she hurried on faster and faster, though never had her progress appeared so slow. "I've been hard, cruel hard, all these years!" she repeated to herself. "But I'll make up for it, if the Lord'll only give me time. I'll——" Her foot went splash in something wet, and pulling herself up suddenly, she discovered that she had almost walked into the foul, stagnant pool which poisoned the air round about "Sharker's Rents." Skirting its black, slimy edges, she came to the first of the four or five tumbledown tenements which were known by this name. The door of the first one had rotted away from its hinges, and lay partly blocking up the entrance; within, all was dark. But as she listened, she heard faint, human sounds proceeding from the interior, and as she stepped across the partial barricade, a voice from out the obscurity enquired:

"Who's there?"

"It's me," she answered in trembling tones, "it's me, Priscilla!" as she groped her way across the uneven floor towards the corner from whence the sound came.

"Then you have come," came in a husky whisper from the man who lay on a heap of rubbish. "I've been lying here listening and listening, and praying that you would," and a skeleton-like hand was stretched out and grasped her own in a fierce clutch.

"It's about the boy—I'd never have troubled you about myself—but he's the last of seven, and I couldn't die in peace with the thought of him being left to starve—though God knows he's used to it—but you won't let him do that? Say you won't!" and the voice came in agonised gasps. "He's only a little chap, and you'd never miss it. I'll never be able to lie quiet in my grave if——"

"Oh, Dick! Don't ye talk so!" cried Miss Priscilla, in a choking voice. "I'll be a mother to him, that I will; only try and get well, and I'll take care of you both, and you shall have the best of everything. The Lord forgive me for my wicked thoughts all these many years!"

"Bless you, bless you!" murmured the dying man; "but it's too late for me—it's the hard life and the starvation and the exposure of the last six months as has done for me, and I couldn't swallow now if I tried, though I would have asked you for a morsel this morning, only you spoke so fierce and looked so hard; but it's not too late for the boy, for I've often gone without so that he might have a bite."

"Oh, Dick, Dick! You'll break my heart. You as were the best-looking and the cleverest young fellow in the village! That you should have come to this, and me left comfortably off and living in my own house! Oh, never, never will I forgive myself!"

"God bless you, Priscilla! You're a good woman, though you did speak a bit roughlike this morning; but I behaved like a scoundrel to you, though I never forgot you, never, and never had a happy day after I left you. She wasn't a bad wife, Priscilla," speaking with painful eagerness, "and she had a hard life of it for years before she died, for I sunk lower and lower—but I shall die easy now that I've seen you once more; and I know you'll be good to the boy, though he is her child. Say you forgive me, Priscilla, for I'm going fast!"

Miss Pritchett was down on her knees beside her old sweetheart, wiping his clammy forehead with her shawl, and sobbing incoherent words of grief and affection, such as none could have believed possible who had not heard her. Then, as she felt the hand that had held hers so convulsively relax, and the breath come faint and fluttering, she whispered in his ear:

"Good-bye, Dick—good-bye!"

And the dying man heard her voice before his soul took flight, and replied with a flash of the lightning that comes before death, and with his thoughts wandering back to his old sweethearting days:

"Good-bye, 'Cilly! You'll meet me at the stile, to-morrow!"

A group of labourers who passed Sharker's Rents on their way to work in the fields, in the very early morning, were sorely amazed at the sight which met their eyes on passing an open doorway. For, seated beside a heap of straw, on which lay the dead body of a man—whose ragged garments showed the extremity of destitution—was that equally feared and detested Miss Priscilla Pritchett, that cantankerous old maid whose name was synonymous with all that was odious and

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disagreeable! Her hand still rested on the coarse sacking, which was his only coverlet, and, at her feet, a little ragged urchin lay curled up asleep.

But what tongue can tell of the astonishment which prevailed when it became generally known that she had taken the "beggar's brat" home to live with her, or of the utter stupefaction in which the general astonishment culminated on the day when she provided a feast, and threw open the gate of her apple orchard to all the boys in the village?

PLYMOUTH AND DEVONPORT.

SAILING along the Channel, where there is little but the name to distinguish it from a broad and stormy ocean, as the wild Atlantic billows come rolling in fresh, and green, and seething, you see the white-sailed ships making towards a wall of bleak and rugged cliffs, fringed with cruel surf, as if they were intent on wreck and destruction. Then the dark headlands part asunder, and a lovely bay is revealed, bordered with green hills and woods that feather down to the water's edge; while grim forts with black and wicked-looking guns eye you from the heights around, and peer from the batteries on the white breakwater that stretches across the bay.

All this opens out to view as you round the Mewstone, a huge rock that rises like some shaggy sea-monster from the waves, all dripping with the green seas that break against its hoary sides. With a stiffish breeze and a strong tide sweeping in, all may be rough-and-tumble outside; but, as we shoot past the grand breakwater, about whose outer face the billows are foaming, a pleasing calm succeeds. The pleasant haven opens forth with reaches that stretch out, as it seems, into the very bosom of the land. Far and near are ships at anchor or in motion; fishing-boats shake out their brown sails; a wreath of tumultuous vapour darts out from the black sides of some huge ironclad, and thundering echoes are repeated from one hillside to another. Great ocean steamers, too, lie in the roadstead, some clustered over with a swarm of emigrants for the New World, while the "jödel" of the Switzer sounds across the water, or the bluff Teuton sings a farewell song of his fatherland. Or, perhaps, it is some great steamship from Africa, fresh from the land of gold and ivory, her funnels hissing forth white steam and her sides trembling with restrained force, as mails and passengers are hurried ashore, ere she passes on her course once more up-channel.

It is a rendezvous of nations, too, this great haven of Plymouth, and foreign flags are fluttering in company with our famous old "Jack." Now it is a German gunboat that pops in for a morning call, or again, a French cruiser, or a ponderous Italian war-ship. And to the sights and sounds of all these, you may add the rustle of the waters, the clanking of anchor-chains, the cheery yeave-ho of the sailors, or the measured beat of oars, as some man-o'-war's boat flashes past, with stout arms at the thwarts and gold lace at the stern; to say nothing of the white-winged yachts and pleasure-boats that dart in and out of creeks and inlets like so many midges dancing in the sunshine. And where the hills are not crowned with trees they are covered with the blue roofs and white stone walls of houses, with towers and spires here and there. And yonder is the green Hoe, and there the citadel, with its scarps and zigzags, and the black guns showing their muzzles over the ramparts.

Besides the creeks and inlets, five rivers of more or less renown join their waters in the Bay, or Sound, and carry the adventurous skiff into the very heart of the fair Devonshire land. There is the Yealme, first of all, that has cut out a fine ravine right under Wembury Head, where the Mewstone rises from the waters like a guardian lion; and then in the Haven itself, we have the Cattewater, which forms a considerable haven in itself, where fleets have often lain at anchor, the Cattewater being the estuary of that so-called river Plym, which is said to give its name to town and bay. Thus Drayton in the "Polyolbion"—

> And Plym that claims by right
> The christening of that bay that bears thy noble name.
> Upon the British coast what ship yet ever came,
> That not of Plymouth hears, where those brave navies lie,
> From cannon's thundering throats that all the world defy?

Then, on the other side of the Sound, where Drake's Island mounts guard over the entrance, we have the Hamoaze, from which open out the docks and basins of the Royal Naval Yard, and which is formed by the rivers Tavy

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and Tamar—the latter long the boundary stream between the Saxon and Celtic lands—and by the Lynher, a Cornish stream, whose creeks run up to ancient St. Germans, with its old Norman towers.

It is a fair surmise that the prefix Plym, or Plymp, survives from some ancient Celtic name, once belonging to the bay, the number five being represented in Welsh and Cornish by "pum" or "pymp," the name of the river "Plym" having been acquired in days comparatively modern. Thus we have Plympton close by—but not exactly on the River Plym—an ancient stannary town, with traditional franchises which, to use the current expression, are lost in the mists of antiquity. There is Plymstock, too, in the same neighbourhood, but still far enough from the river, an ancient village, in whose vicinity, at Mount Batten, a find of early Celtic coinage has been made. Hereabouts, too, passes the Ridgway, an ancient British and Roman road. And in the same neighbourhood, above Oreston—famous for its quarries, from which was taken much of the stone that forms the breakwater—rises Fort Stamford, one of the chain of forts built in 1864, to protect Plymouth and its dockyards on the landward side. In building this fort was discovered a Romano-British cemetery—a fact which indicates the existence of considerable settlement in the neighbourhood; to which the ancient distich also testifies:

> Plympton was a borough town
> When Plymouth was a fuzzy down.

Nor are there wanting more doubtful traditions ascribing a mystic antiquity to the famous Haven and the settlements on its banks. Here may have landed Brute and the Trojan heroes. And the green turf of Plymouth Hoe was long ago scored with the outline of two huge figures, which are said to have commemorated a wrestling-match between the giant Gogmagog and Corinæus, the Cornish hero, the blood of the former, who was vanquished in the strife, having given its characteristic colour to the red sandstone rocks in the vicinity.

Scandinavian pirates from the Baltic, who swarmed on the opposite coast of France, and formed settlements there even during the period of Roman dominion, must have often visited this noble fiord, and formed villages and stockades on its innumerable inlets; and these may have left traces here and there in the names of places, strangely intermingled with those of Celtic origin. But when we first hear of Plymouth in reliable records, it is called Tamarworth—a name which might have fairly been adopted for the new dockyard town, which bears the less characteristic name of Devonport. And, then, in Norman records it figures as Sutton—with manors respectively belonging to the Priors of Plympton Priory and to the Valletorts, a proud Norman family, allied by marriage to the Plantagenets. Some kind of a seafaring and fishing town survived this double patronage, and Plymouth had its Mayor, and its Merchant Guild, and some form of municipal government, long before its formal incorporation by charter, A.D. 1439. Yet it was an open town, without walls or defences; and, as the Haven became a rendezvous for the growing naval power of England, the town experienced, many a time and oft, the reprisals of exasperated foes.

From the commencement of the long wars of the Plantagenets waged to increase or preserve their dominions on the other side of the Channel, Plymouth was often concerned in gathering and fitting out the royal fleets. In 1287 a great armada of three hundred and twenty-five ships, under Edmund Duke of Lancaster, sailed for Guienne, as to which the King of France had made some injurious pretensions, and from soon after this time the growing importance of Plymouth is shown by its sending deputies to Parliament. Then, in 1339, the French attacked the town, burnt and plundered a good part of it, and sailed away. In return for this Plymouth cheerfully furnished twenty-six ships and three hundred and three men for that siege of Calais, which is chiefly memorable to us in connection with the citizens in the shirts with ropes round their necks, who offered themselves to King Edward's vengeance. A few years later the French were at Plymouth again, burning and destroying, and then making off. And then, in 1355, Plymouth became the rendezvous of the Black Prince's fleet both before and after the Battle of Poictiers. And here he landed after that famous victory, amidst the joyous acclamations of the inhabitants, with the French King as prisoner and his ships laden with spoil.

In 1399 the French were at it again, and repulsed for a time; yet in the following year James de Bourbon, sailing towards Wales with a powerful fleet, for the assistance of Owen Glyndwr, touched at Plymouth and destroyed and burnt part of the town. A few years after, the

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Sieur Duchastel of Bretagne, with a kind of privateer fleet—France and England being nominally at peace—landed his crews of mingled Normans and Bretons, recruited from all the ports along the coast, and burnt six hundred houses. From this calamity Plymouth recovered but slowly, so that while up to this time the town had been rich and flourishing from its foreign trade, we find that some years after, the town sought a reduction of its fee farm rent due to Plympton Priory on account of its "povertee and decaye." The memory of this disastrous invasion was long preserved in the name of Breton Side given to the part of the town that suffered most, a name which lasted even to our own era of municipal improvements.

Not that Plymouth suffered such indignity without reprisals; for one Will Wilford, a Plymouth sea-captain, fitted out an expedition which "repaid the monsieurs in their own coyn." More effectual protection was afforded by the establishment of a regular Channel fleet in 1442, composed of eight ships with a hundred and fifty men in each, which were told off to patrol the Channel and overawe the privateering gentry from the opposite coast. This wise provision was probably due to the counsels of good Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and it probably ceased with his fall, when all care for the safety of the coast was abandoned. With the Wars of the Roses we have Kingmaker Warwick landing at Plymouth, though some accounts say Dartmouth, with a handful of French soldiers lent him by the wily King Louis the Eleventh, and with him his son-in-law, the Duke of Clarence. From Plymouth he began his triumphal march, the men of the West flocking in numbers to his standard; and in the following year Margaret of Anjou, coming to share the crown of her restored consort, was met two days later by the fatal news of the defeat and death of Warwick on Barnet field, and departed from Plymouth to meet defeat and final ruin at Tewkesbury.

With the following century the curtain rises upon a new world, opening fields of enterprise unimagined in their wildest dreams by the ancient worthies of the merchant guild of Plymouth. The seamen of the West shared in most of the enterprising voyages of the period. Sailors from Plymouth accompanied Sebastian Cabot, and in 1530 we hear of old Will Hawkins, the father of the famous Sir John, who sails in the "Paul of Plymouth" for the Brazils. There were no more barren adventures in plundering Norman villages, or burning Breton haystacks. A world of golden promise lay in the pathway of the setting sun, with easy wealth as the reward of the adventurous daring and desperate courage that characterised these dashing sea-rovers.

Forth they sail for the stormy Western main, gay and confident, as for a bridal. The townsfolk are all gathered on the Hoe, that famous height that overlooks the Sound; the ships luff up to give and receive a last farewell. Trumpets sound from the decks, salvoes of artillery, while the music from the town sounds its fanfare on the breeze, and the ordnance on the shore replies to the salvoes from the ships, while the merry bells ring out, and the joyous turmoil, with the shouting of the people, sounds far off as the ships disappear into the sunset glow, sailing away "with the fayre evening and silence of the night."

And if the departure is joyous, with all kinds of peril and danger in prospect, judge what the return must be, say, when Drake comes sailing into port with a fair wind and flowing sail. One quiet Sunday afternoon, when all the people are in church, Drake comes in sight, hailing from Nombre di Dios, with Spanish gold in the lockers. The news flies like wild-fire. It reaches the solemn parish church, where the people are quietly praying, and away they go at the word, leaving the parson in his desk, who follows, too, no doubt, with his cassock under his arm, away to the Hoe, there to shout their welcome to brave Drake and his convoy.

It is with the accession of Elizabeth that the golden age began of the seamen of the West. The Queen loved her dashing rover, and the more stately captains of gentle blood, of whom Plymouth can display a famous bede roll. There were Sir Thomas Stukely, for Florida; Sir Richard Grenville, for Virginia; Sir Humphrey Gilbert, for Newfoundland; Sir Martyn Frobisher and Master Davies, for the North-West Passage; and the brilliant Sir Walter Raleigh, for Guiana. All gallant gentlemen and good seamen; but the greatest of them all was Francis Drake, who sailed forth in the "Pelican," for his famous voyage round the world.

Close upon three years after, the "Pelican" lay once more in harbour, her voyage safely accomplished, and loaded

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with golden spoil. Then she sailed round to Deptford, and Elizabeth came on board, feasted gaily with her captain, and dubbed him Sir Francis as she rose from the table.

And then we have the historic scene of the Armada—the English fleet lying all ready for sea, in Cattewater, and Drake and his gallant captains playing bowls on the green Hoe above. And, as Macaulay tells:

> It was about the glorious close of a warm summer's day,
> There came a gallant merchant ship full sail to Plymouth Bay.

It was the twentieth of July, 1588, and the news she brought was that the Armada was in the Channel.

"There is time to finish the rub and beat the Spaniards after," quoth Drake, according to the traditional account, which few have the hardihood to dispute. And as the great Spanish fleet came in sight, sailing in stately order, in the form of a crescent athwart the tide, the English ships sallied out, and then began a running fight that lasted till Don Spaniard, grievously mauled and crippled, came to an anchor off the Flemish coast.

The anniversary of the dispersal and destruction of the Armada was long the subject of a special celebration in Plymouth, the Mayor and notables marching in procession to church for a thanksgiving service, while the bells rang and the people made holiday. This function lasted for at least two centuries after the event.

Eight years after the Armada there were mustered in Plymouth Haven the fleet and army—one hundred and seventy ships and fifteen thousand men, under Essex—which dealt Elizabeth's return blow against Spain, and effected the capture of Cadiz.

But the glory of the age had departed, when the two veteran captains Hawkins and Drake departed on their last expedition for the Spanish main. Victory was not longer at their beck and call; failure succeeded to mischance, and the old vikings sang their death-songs and departed to the Valhalla of the brave, finding each a sailor's grave in the stormy seas.

With the end of the sixteenth century and the departure of its heroes from the scene, the adventurous seaman, freebooter, buccaneer, and what not, began to show as a less worthy object. There was no longer much patriotism or sectarian fervour about the business, and the exploits of those who followed it had a perilous smack of piracy about them. But legitimate commerce increased, and in 1606 a Plymouth Company was chartered, for settling that part of America which was then known under the general name of Virginia, but which we now call New England. Then the "May Flower" sailed from Plymouth, A.D. 1620, and her colonists founded the New Plymouth, which looks over to the Old across thousands of miles of stormy seas.

There was a considerable flavour of Puritanism about the old as well the new Plymouth. During the civil war Plymouth went firmly and solidly for the Parliament. Its old walls were repaired and new outworks were hastily constructed, and Plymouth stood out stoutly against the King's army, which was compelled eventually to raise the siege.

With the Restoration came war with the Dutch, and De Ruyter was off the coast with the Dutch fleet threatening the scanty naval preparations in the Haven, but drawing off without molesting Plymouth. Indeed, such naval power as we then possessed was concentrated chiefly about the Thames, and the western ports were left to shift for themselves, as in the naval manœuvres of 1888, when Plymouth was pretty much at the mercy of a fortunately imaginary foe.

With its strong Puritan element, there was little doubt as to the side Plymouth would take when William of Orange landed at Torbay. Plymouth was the first English town to declare for his cause, and after landing the Prince, the fleet came round to Plymouth and wintered in the Cattewater; and once firmly seated on the throne, King William began to form the great naval establishments which have since been so largely developed.

Up to this time there had been no great resources for building and refitting ships of war at Plymouth. There was a dockyard on a small scale for repairing ships in Cattewater, and in the harbour of Plymouth properly so called, which still bears the name of Sutton Pool, from the ancient name of the manor, there was a row of storehouses and a victualling office, which is still in existence, and serves as a depôt for emigrants.

But William's surveyors saw the capabilities of the fine inlet called the Hamoaze, and on its shores docks were excavated and naval buildings raised, although for a long time the dockyard workmen lived

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either in Plymouth town or in hulks on the river. But presently a town began to rise upon the hills above the banks of Hamoaze, which for long was known only as the "Dock," but which in 1824 assumed the name of Devonport.

A splendid deep-water channel leads between two projecting points into the Hamoaze, but to reach it ships must sweep round the strongly-armed Drake's Island, and, swept as it is by batteries on every side, it would be impossible to force a passage without first destroying the protecting forts.

The peninsula between Plymouth and Devonport is divided by a considerable channel called Stonehouse Pool, on the shores of which a couple of centuries ago stood a solitary house of stone, from which the neighbourhood took its name. And here, in connection with the splendid Victualling Office which crowns the point with its handsome façade, has arisen a third town called Stonehouse. The three towns are united by tramways and bridges, and might almost be considered as one; but they differ strongly in characteristics, Plymouth being exclusively commercial, a seaport town full of vigour and enterprise, with a strong municipal organisation, while the other two are almost entirely dependent on the Government works and vast naval establishments. Rivalling the Hoe of Plymouth in its fine prospects over land and sea, Devonport has its "Mount Wise," the head-quarters of naval and military administration.

The rising naval dockyards were seriously threatened in 1779, when a combined French and Spanish fleet held the Channel and threatened a descent on Plymouth. There was, no doubt, a serious design to destroy both Portsmouth and Plymouth, but stormy winds, which have so often befriended old Albion, prevented any execution of the project. The danger, however, gave rise to the formation of a volunteer corps raised in the same year at Plymouth; and from that time till the end of the great French war, numerous corps of volunteers were organised. There were the Prince of Wales's Regiment, the Plymouth Blues, the Dockyard battalions, and other corps.

The scare of 1779 also gave rise to a pleasant little farce, for which Charles Dibdin wrote the music, and which was produced at Covent Garden in the same year, under the title of "Plymouth in Danger," which, although not rich in local allusions, gives one a lively idea of the streets of old Portsmouth.

"Streets!" cries Ben, the comic sailor. "They're more like alleys. What a plague do they make them so narrow for? There's no such thing as walking in them without one's so sober one's not fit to be seen."

And the besetting failing of the jolly, drinking, fighting tar of those days is indicated in a song by the same Ben:

> When Boatswain pipes to meals or prayers,
> We tip the leisure jog;
> But fly like tigers, cats, or bears,
> When call'd all hands to grog.

The revolution worked by steam in naval matters was met at Plymouth by the creation of a new steam-yard at Keyham, just to the north of the old naval docks. This was opened in 1853—not by Her Majesty herself, but by her representative, the line-of-battle ship "Queen," of one hundred and sixteen guns, which was taken in all standing, the sailors manning the yards, and cheering lustily.

For the safety of this grand naval depôt, which offers almost insurmountable obstacles to an attack from the seaward side, the Commission of 1860 recommended the construction of a chain of forts on the landward side to guard against a surprise from that quarter, the then existing defences being of a trivial character. These forts have long been completed, and, when properly armed, will provide a sufficient defence for the three towns against any attack from an army in the field.

Although Plymouth Sound was, in many respects, an admirable natural haven, yet it lay exposed to gales from the southward, and to the terrible swell that beat up from the Atlantic. Even the open roadstead of Torbay was thought a safer station for the fleet, although Lord Howe prophesied that it would, one day, prove the grave of the British fleet. Men-of-war, entering the Sound, then anchored in Cawsand Bay, on the west side of the Haven, under Mount Edgcumbe, whose beautiful woods and noble glades are the greatest ornament of the view. But this was a dangerous anchorage when the gale veered to the eastward.

As to the sea that was sometimes running in Plymouth Haven, we may judge from the fate of the "Dutton," A.D. 1796, a fine East Indiaman, that was driven on shore just under the Citadel, her fate being watched by thousands from the shore and from the Hoe above. There is a graphic print of the period, which many must have

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seen, showing the great ship dismasted and beating upon the rocks, the green seas washing over her deck and spouting through her portholes, while on the poop, and clinging to the rigging, are seen the forms of despairing men and women. The "Dutton" had four hundred soldiers on board, as well as ordinary passengers; but happily, by the courage and devotion of a few, communication was established by means of ropes, with the shore, along which the passengers were dragged in improvised cradles, and, with the exception of ten or fifteen who were drowned in the surf, all were rescued from the battered wreck.

Soon after this casualty the scheme was mooted for a breakwater, to stretch across the centre of the Haven, where a convenient shoal existed as a foundation for the structure—if structure it can be called—the breakwater being, in fact, just a long heap of stones dropped into the water. But it has admirably answered its purpose since its completion in 1841, and has sustained no serious damage even from the most furious storms. It cost a million and a half, and never was money better spent, for it has rendered Plymouth Sound one of the best and safest harbours in the world.

There are many other points of interest in connection with the fine old port and stirring town of Plymouth, whose narrow streets have given place to broad and pleasant thoroughfares, and which boasts of municipal buildings and thriving institutions of the handsomest and most modern type. But as to all this, information can be sought in Mr. Worth's pleasant and profitable "History of Plymouth," from which many of the incidents mentioned in this paper have been drawn.

As to the actual Dockyard, it has of late been confined to the building of gunboats of the sea-bird nomenclature. But in the proposed additions to our line of fighting-ships, no doubt the magnificent and costly establishment of Devonport will take its fair share; and with the splendid seafaring population of all the neighbouring coast, should need arise, there is no doubt that Plymouth could furnish men as well as ships. It used to be so in old times, when a popular commander, such as Cochrane, could go ashore in Sutton Pool, and man his ship in a few hours. And, if the need arises, there is no doubt that the seamen o the West will show themselves again, as their fathers were, among the bravest defenders of the brave old flag.

BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "Lucy Carter."

CHAPTER XXVI. CONCLUSION.

Did any one ever before look forward to a birthday as Brownie had looked forward to hers? And now that it had come, a great joy had come with it. Some unpleasantness also; witness Mrs. Northcott's reproachful face at the breakfast-table.

Six o'clock arrived, but not Mr. Litton, yet Brownie felt no uneasiness at his absence. She had held an interview with Mr. Vaile, and, after listening to his expostulations, obtained the wherewithal to meet the cheque which was already drawn upon Sir Edward Spearing and Company for eight hundred and forty pounds sterling.

Dinner-time found the small party complete. Mr. Litton sat at the foot of the table, opposite to the hostess, looking as important as though the whole house belonged to him.

Evening clothes did not exhibit Mr. Litton to advantage, and this evening he had donned them in haste. His cravat was crumpled; his chin looked more blue, his eyes more red, his teeth more black, than usual.

Henry Grayson sat next to Brownie, and on the left of Mrs. Northcott.

"So you are going to astonish us all, Margaret," said Mr. Butterworth, for Brownie had made no secret of the evening's entertainment.

"I think we are," was her answer, given in quiet tones, strangely in contrast with her flushed face and very bright eyes. "Uncle Walter is to be the magician to-night, you know."

"Then you have had a cold shoulder turned to you, Anderson?" said Mr. Vaile.

"'Most can raise the flower now, for all have got the seed,'" whispered Lady Spearing. "The old story, Mr. Anderson."

"I don't think you will say that the seed has fallen upon stony ground," said Brownie; while Mr. Litton's voice made itself heard from the other end of the table.

"It is marvellous—upon my word—astonishing; I think I can do just what I like with Margaret."

"I cannot say I approve of it, Henry," said Mrs. Northcott; nor did Grayson approve of it, either.

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"I can't see any good in this hypnotism," he was remarking. "If it could take the place of the ordinary anæsthetics, or be employed for the detection of crime, now. But I understand it to be good for neither of these purposes, Anderson?"

"So far as my experience goes, you are perfectly correct," was the response. "You must suggest the idea; but directly the suggestion is made, action follows, with or without the will of the person hypnotised."

"Well, well," said the Rector, "I am sure it is very kind of Margaret to take so much trouble for our amusement."

"We hope to afford you a little instruction as well," she answered, with a poor attempt at a smile; for, as the fateful hour drew near, her anxiety was becoming well-nigh insupportable.

Mrs. Northcott gave the signal, and the ladies rose to leave the room.

"Only one cigarette," Brownie whispered, as she passed Mr. Litton; and, accordingly, he soon followed her to the drawingroom.

It was the first dinner-party at Eastwood since Mr. Northcott's death, and the conversation naturally turned to their old friend and to Clement.

"I begin to think your office will prove a sinecure, after all, Henry," said Mr. Butterworth.

"I never thought otherwise," was the confident answer. "There could not have been a more convincing array of evidence. There is only another month, and then the whole thing may be forgotten."

When they entered the drawing-room they found Mr. Litton in animated conversation with Maud and Brownie.

"Mr. Anderson," exclaimed the latter, "here is Mr. Litton insisting that I shall be mesmerised first."

"He only needs persuasion; he cannot refuse to gratify on your birthday."

"Oh, no, I don't," was Mr. Litton's answer. "I want to see some one else play the fool first. 'Place aux dames,' you know."

But at last he gave way to Brownie's persistence. Meantime, Anderson was calling Maud's attention to her cousin's excited demeanour. He expected a mere fiasco; he intended to do his best to assist her; but feeling confident of failure, he pitied this too-hopeful girl from the bottom of his heart.

The chairs were all placed close against the wall, with the exception of one which stood beside a small Sutherland table in the middle of the room. Upon this chair Mr. Litton took his seat.

"Surely something must come of all this," said Maud, who had just returned to the room after a brief absence.

"Yes; probably brain fever to your cousin," was Anderson's reply.

"Clement is here," she whispered. "Whatever shall we do with him if it fails? I hope mother will not interfere."

Before commencing operations, he said a few words in a low tone to Mr. Vaile, who carelessly took up his position next to the hostess.

"Is this a birthday present, Margaret?" asked Mr. Litton, as Anderson came towards him. "Very pretty; do to keep all the love-letters, eh?"

He referred to a small writing desk which was standing upon the table by his side.

Anderson produced a glass ball, brightly polished, and of the size of an ordinary marble. Mr. Litton at once turned his mind to the business of the evening, letting his eyes converge upon the glistening ball.

He sat bolt upright, seeming to grow rapidly more and more rigid, like a man being turned into stone. His jaw slightly dropped; little by little the eyelids fell, until you would have been certain they were entirely closed. The colour forsook his fat cheeks, leaving them livid, as though from instinctive fear of his danger. Brownie, standing apart from the rest, looked like a runner awaiting the signal to commence a race.

The spectators seemed to be fascinated; not a sound was heard except the regular tick-tick of the clock on the mantelpiece. Maud stood at the door like a sentry; Mr. Vaile did not remove his eyes from Mrs. Northcott.

Anderson slipped the glass ball into his pocket, and prepared to make a few passes before Mr. Litton's face, and now Brownie realised that the important moment had almost come.

Her determination seemed to forsake her, and she feared lest she should lose her senses just when she so greatly needed their entire possession.

But the thought of Clement waiting, actually within the house, waiting to be called in and congratulated, brought her renewed strength; and, as soon as the signal was given, she was ready to do her part.

Quick as thought she drew from her pocket a black silk scarf, with its ends knotted together. In an instant she had thrown it round the neck of the uncon-

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scious Mr. Litton, and placed his right arm within it. The small table was wheeled in front of him; pens, ink, and two blank cheques were placed ready to his hand, whilst the guests looked on with constantly increasing wonder.

A single interruption—an exclamation of disapproval might have aroused Mr. Litton, and spoiled all Brownie's plans. Mr. Vaile began to see daylight; Mrs. Northcott was his old friend and his respected client, but his sympathies were at present with Brownie.

You could hear Maud's ring tapping against the door-handle as she held it in her trembling hand. Anderson looked at Brownie with unfeigned admiration. This method of procedure had not occurred to him. Brownie strove to speak; but, at first, the words refused to come at her bidding.

Four minutes had gone, seeming to her like a lifetime. Again she attempted utterance, and now with better success.

"This is a cheque," she said, thrusting a pen into Mr. Litton's left hand; "you are to sign it with the name of John Northcott."

Henry Grayson began to think he had spoken too soon. He might be called upon to exercise his judicial function, after all.

Mrs. Northcott would assuredly have risen, but for Mr. Vaile's restraining hand.

Sir Edward Spearing was a strong man, not given to sentiment; but a great lump rose in his throat, nevertheless.

They all awaited the result of Brownie's trembling words with painful and highly-strung anxiety. She had herself taken a pen, and as she put it to the paper, Mr. Litton—his right arm securely resting in the sling—wrote with his left hand, and with perfect ease, the name of John Northcott at the bottom of the blank cheque.

Suddenly Mrs. Northcott's voice rang through the room:

"Walter! Walter!"

She had not even yet grasped the entire situation; but she saw that some trick was being played upon her brother.

Mr. Litton started violently, dropped the pen, and slowly opened his eyes.

"Well, what have I been up to this time?" he exclaimed, with a yawn, as though he had just awakened from a deep sleep. "Made a fool of myself, eh? Any more racing, Anderson? Who's won, eh?"

The grave faces around the room seemed to startle him, and looking down, his eyes fell upon the sling. Tugging at it violently, he turned as grey as ashes, and started up.

"Some cursed trick!" he cried. "Mary, you have let them fool me. Anderson, I owe you one for this. What does it mean? Margaret, what have you been doing?"

Stepping towards the table, she pointed to the cheque which he had just signed with his late brother-in-law's name, whilst Anderson whispered to Sir Edward Spearing, whose wife was holding a smelling-bottle under Mrs. Northcott's nose.

"You have shown us how you committed the forgery last May," said Spearing. "With your right arm rendered useless, you took the pen in your left and readily wrote Mr. Northcott's signature. I am a magistrate. It is in my power to order you into custody. Unless you at once make a full confession I shall do so."

By this time Mrs. Northcott had recovered consciousness, while Brownie looked as though she would lose hers at any moment.

"Walter, Walter," pleaded his sister, "say something; surely there is something you can say. You were always unfortunate, but never—never wicked, nor, as I knew, left-handed."

As a fact, she had known very little indeed of her brother. He had arrived in England last May with his pockets empty, but with his brain full of all kinds of schemes for their replenishment. A more successful rogue than himself had enabled him to present a tolerable appearance at Eastwood; and this man, whose acquaintance had been made on the voyage, had actually visited him at Middleton some months before. It was after the second fracture of his arm, ten years ago, that he had taught himself to write with his left hand; since then he had practised the art, until he became perfectly ambidextrous.

He had arrived at Middleton, in the first place, without any definite intention of robbing his brother-in-law. It remained a mere question of opportunity, and upon breaking his arm so soon after his arrival at Eastwood, the happy thought of the forgery had occurred to him, and proved irresistible.

But Mr. Litton's little game was now played out. He was too much of a cosmopolitan to have retained many insular prejudices; he knew when he was beaten.

As for Sir Edward Spearing, Mr. Litton knew that he was playing a game of brag. He also could play at this game; he only held one card, it was true, but that was a trump.

"Margaret," he said, "a word with you."

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But before she could tear herself from her friends, the door opened, and in walked Clement. Disregarding all that had recently taken place, conscious only of the new possibilities which had opened up for himself, he walked straight towards Brownie, who timidly held out her hand to welcome him.

"I don't want you," said Mr. Litton. "You may go back to Mrs. Oliver." But, seeing that Brownie had no intention of leaving Clement's side, he thought it well to continue: "I never bear malice, Margaret. How about those shares now?"

"Here is the cheque," she answered; "but before I give it to you, you must make a full confession."

Mr. Litton did not lose a moment.

"It is a brave man's part to bow to the decree of destiny," he said, in loud, bombastic tones. "I bow to mine. I did make use of certain facilities I had acquired in another land—yes, I did certainly write poor Northcott's name. I think that is all you want?" he added, turning to Brownie.

Clement would have spoken, but she restrained him; and, pocketing the cheque as he went, Mr. Litton left the room and the house, without the loss of a moment; disdaining to cast even a single word to Mrs. Northcott.

It was while Maud led her mother away that the scene occurred to which Brownie had so confidently looked forward. Congratulations poured in upon Clement from all sides, whilst he put them lightly aside, exactly as she had foretold. Henry Grayson, alone, held aloof until he saw an opportunity of speaking to Brownie by herself.

"What have you to say to me, Margaret?" he asked, enlightened by the incidents of the evening on more points than one.

She understood him only too well.

"Only that—that I am sorry, Henry, and that I am sure you are convinced of Clement's innocence at last."

He shrugged his shoulders and went towards Mr. Vaile.

"You have seen what has taken place," he said. "The rest is for you; there is not much time to lose."

"Thank you, Grayson!" exclaimed Clement, overhearing; for a moment the two men eyed one another, then their hands met with a hearty clasp.

Everybody was ready to go now.

"We are all friends here," said Mr. Butterworth, pulling down his woollen comforter from his mouth, "you will not think that one of the oldest is taking a liberty, Clement. Remember this; your crime was committed long before the forgery of your father's name. It consisted in wasted opportunities, foolish extravagance, and, in short, in a total disregard of all that is of value on this earth. Take an old fellow's advice; don't tempt fortune again, you—you may not find an angel to save you a second time."

Clement followed his friends to the door, where Anderson was the last to bid him good-night.

Upon returning to the drawing-room he found Brownie standing with one foot on the fender, as she stared into the fire.

"Brownie," he said, taking her passive hand in his, "how can I ever thank you?"

"Please don't try, Clement," she answered, without looking at him.

"Suppose that, instead of thanking you for what you have already done, I am going to ask you to do something else—the greatest favour of all, Brownie?"

"I don't think there is anything else I can do," she said, slowly shaking her head.

"You can try to give me your love, Brownie. I am not worthy of it; but yet I ask you to give it to me."

"I cannot," she replied; then she turned and frankly met his eyes. "Oh, Clement, don't you know that it is yours already—that I gave it to you long, long ago?"

They both looked very guilty when Maud joined them, half an hour later, with a message from her mother, that Clement's room was already prepared. But it was late before he sought sleep that night.

The next two months were eventful ones to Clement Northcott. He became Henry Grayson's partner; he received his fortune of fifty thousand pounds; and then immediately relinquished his newly-acquired share in the Brick-works once more into Grayson's hands. And, last of all, one bright, sunshiny, January morning, he led the girl he loved—who had shown how well she loved him—to the altar.

It is some years since this event took place; but there is one day in Clement's calendar which his boys will never fail to celebrate. While he will always remember the fifth of November, and Brownie's success with her plot.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 37.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER II. DINNER AND A CRITIC.

COURT GARDEN was in its way a perfect country house, and the Squire was loved and respected by all his tenants; but to the world in general he was known as the husband of Mrs. Eagle Bennison. This was his title of honour, and he was proud to accept it. He always showed the same imperturbable front to the world; whilst his wife was, on the whole, like a highly-cut diamond, many sided. She had her sprightly mood, her sad mood, her religious mood, her worldly, her playful, her would-be childlike, and her pathetic mood. No one had yet ever found out which of these many moods was most natural to her, and if any one ventured to decide this knotty point, he soon avowed himself wrong.

Mrs. Eagle Bennison's dinner-parties were always pleasant; for, in spite of her own personality being never forgotten, the Squire's wife was not unwilling that others, when in her house, should shine; and as she had a kind of childlike simplicity, in spite of her great artificiality, she somehow made opposite elements fuse together from sheer surprise at her audacity.

To describe her would need time; for how can pen do justice to the various lights and shades that flitted over the pretty face of Mrs. Eagle Bennison? Her age could not be guessed, for trouble had never made wrinkles; her bright eyes were never hidden by pince-nez or spectacles, though she was known to be shortsighted; her teeth — were they hers except by purchase?—looked like pearly treasures, and were so often exhibited when she smiled, that at last one learnt to expect the vision just as regularly as, but more frequently than, the cuckoo of a Swiss clock. She had no grey hairs, though what aid to everlasting colour she used was not revealed; and as for the rest of her appearance, she was not tall, but rather short and neat; her hands were plump and white, and profusely ornamented with jewels which had descended from the Eagles, the Bennisons, and the Eagle Bennisons. These precious stones were unfailing subjects of conversation; for girls were of course delighted to hear that this diamond ring had once belonged to Lady Eagle when her husband was Governor of Bengal, and that the present Mrs. Eagle Bennison had inherited it through dear Sir Joseph Eagle, with whom she had been a prime favourite.

But enough of the hostess, for dinner is going on, and the Squire's mutton is being eaten and praised, and Elva Kestell is listening to her neighbours' remarks with a smile, a really natural smile, on her lips. Mrs. Eagle Bennison's cousin, George Guthrie, was so often at Court Garden that he was almost one of the household; and Elva was glad she had been taken in by him this evening, for she was in no mood to be pleasant, and George was glad of a listener, and he was always good company. There was a twinkle in his eyes, though seldom a smile on his lips, when he spoke. He was a confirmed bachelor, and having known Elva from childhood, they were on those intimate terms which are as

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delightful as they are rare. They called each other by their christian-names, and ideas of matrimony never crossed their minds.

Elva and her father having arrived a little late, she had not much noticed the other guests, till, now that she had time to look round, she saw a stranger, with a clever, refined face, talking to a young lady with straw-coloured complexion, and hair, eyelashes, and dress of the same shade. The others Elva knew well; there was the Honourable Walter Akister and his sister Betta. Lord Cartmel, their father, was dreamily listening to Mrs. Bennison; but Elva saw that he was really up in the moon.

George Guthrie saw Elva's glance, and said:

"Isn't my dear cousin radiant to-night? but it's all lost on his lordship. By the way, she told me it was Amice who was to be my lady, and that I was to make her talk about the world. What queer things we poor bachelors, who have no idea of marrying, are given to do. The other day a mamma said: 'Dear Mr. Guthrie, you are such a safe man, now do win my poor Georgie's confidence, and make her give up young Henry Parker. You know he has nothing a year, and must make up his mind to be a bachelor.'"

George Guthrie slightly imitated the voice of the fond parent, so that Elva could not help laughing.

"You were offended by the word bachelor; perhaps some day we shall have to congratulate a Mrs. Guthrie—but that would be funny!"

"Funny; why funny, pray? That is like the impertinence of the young. Let me give you a piece of advice, my dear Elva. A man of my age can offer advice gratis, and expect it to be received graciously, and my advice to you is, don't marry the first man who asks you; if you do, you are sure to repent."

"I hate all men this evening," said Elva, and the words of "The Current Reader" rose before her eyes. "They are so conceited, so prejudiced!"

"What makes you so indignant this evening? Not the first offer?"

"Oh no, no, only a snub. I want to do something worth doing in the world, and at every turn I am stopped, because I am only a woman."

"'I charge thee fling away ambition!' Why you are ambitious and rich. Good heavens, Elva, what terrible fate will overtake you?"

"Don't tease me. I am in earnest. I mean to begin life again."

"Humph! How does one manage that? But look round even this dinner table, and you will see how very well the world gets on without grand ideas and without brains. We will leave Lord Cartmel out of the question, he is all brains, but his son and daughter—on that point silence! Then my dear cousin, she has no brains; but she appreciates those who have. See how happy she she is this evening because she has a new lion."

Elva looked up, and, curiously enough, met the eyes of the stranger, and the magic murmur of introduction not having been pronounced, she looked quickly down again without any look of recognition; but she felt amazed at the stranger's personal notice.

"I suppose you mean the man opposite—who is he?"

"A literary man. Some day I shall become one. I know the tricks of the trade. Put on in general company a slightly supercilious look, despise your neighbours without saying so in words, smile when they give their opinions about books, have abundant notes on scraps of paper put away somewhere for a future book, and never give a direct answer, and —well, then you are a full-fledged literary man. It is easy enough."

"But you forget the book that is published," said Elva, thinking of the crushing review, and feeling very thankful George did not know about it.

"Not at all, that is by no means necessary; it does just as well if you review the works of other people."

"And crush them?"

"Or praise them, if written by a friend."

"Is that ever done?"

"I advise you to try. Only first make friends with the gentleman opposite; he is a reviewer."

"A reviewer! What is his name, or is it a secret?"

"A secret! I should imagine not, as I see his name often in 'The Current Reader.' Ah, you were not introduced because you came late, and my cousin knew you were to be posted up by me."

"What nonsense you are talking this evening," said Elva, determined not to ask the name of the lion.

There were six or seven men who reviewed novels in "The Current Reader," and this one had perhaps read the review which had pained her so much.

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"Nonsense! You are not complimentary! If I were Lord George Guthrie, and you a young lady of ton and fashion, you would think me clever, and my talk fascinating. What is it Lear says? 'Through tattered clothes small vices do appear; robes and furr'd gowns hide all.'"

"I don't suppose reviewers are rich; they can't be, or they wouldn't be so spiteful," said Elva.

"Don't be sarcastic! Do you see that my cousin cannot hear all that the lion is saying, but she laughs just the same. I call that good manners."

"I call it being unreal."

"You have not seen much of society yet."

"I have had about six months of it; I waited for Amice, but now she is out she won't go anywhere. Mamma doesn't understand that it is really from shyness."

"I give you a year to reform. After that, Elva, you will not say what you think; you will not wish to do something which no one else does, and you will not stare so much at literary lions."

Yes, Elva was staring, for the straw-coloured lady had just made a remark.

"Mr. Fenner, do tell me the name of the last novel you reviewed."

"What did she call him?" said Elva, trying to speak naturally, though she felt the hot colour rush to her cheeks.

"Fenner, Hoel Fenner. Perhaps you have never noticed his name, but he is a rising man, only at Rushbrook we are so ignorant of our greatest men. In that way we represent the world."

"Hoel Fenner! Yes, I have seen his name. Why did he come here?"

"He was staying with the Heatons at Saint John's Parsonage."

"Quite near to us," gasped Elva, for Saint John's was a church which nestled in a fir plantation at the foot of the Beacon, and which Mr. Eagle Bennison's father had built for the scattered hamlet known as Rushbrook Mills. Mr. Heaton and his sister were both dining here this evening, and had asked if they might bring Mr. Hoel Fenner with them.

George Guthrie found Elva so silent after this that he turned towards his other neighbour, Miss Heaton, and by the time the ladies left the room he had discussed all the poor of Rushbrook Mills, with whom the amusing bachelor was a great favourite.

When the last sweep of the last train had rustled away, there was a general relaxation of the manly muscles; the Squire leant back in his chair, and George Guthrie bent forward. Walter Akister crossed his legs and turned sideways; the decanters solemnly went round in the fashion of a Parliamentary train, stopping with jerks at each station to discharge contents, and the whole manly company seemed to say, "Now we can be natural, there is no lady to make conversation for."

This was ungenerous conduct, for in the drawing-room the ladies were finding each other dull, their last sallies of wit being reserved till the men should appear.

George Guthrie, this evening, felt more drawn towards the stranger, Hoel Fenner. He knew all the Squire's thoughts, as translated in his meagre vocabulary, by heart. Walter Akister always froze up his geniality, for that young man was shy and not very good-tempered; besides, Mr. Guthrie, who was as clear-sighted as a woman, had discovered that young Walter spent a good deal of his time in looking at Elva Kestell, and he bore him a grudge for this. Lord Cartmel could not keep off sun, moon, and stars for long together, and George Guthrie had no turn for astronomy; but the stranger's face did interest him, so he changed his place and went and sat by him.

"You have no wine, Mr. Fenner; what shall I pass you?"

"Thank you, no more."

"A moderate drinker is the man most denounced just now," said George Guthrie, his face lighting up with his peculiar smile of quiet amusement; "one expects an inmate of Grub Street to be accompanied by a large bowl of punch and a soaked towel round his temples. I have just been telling Miss Kestell that if she ever treads the path of literature you are a man to be feared."

Hoel Fenner was intensely amused, and this look suited his face well. He was certainly handsome, without being an Adonis: tall, well-made; keen, deep-set hazel eyes; hair coming rather low down on his broad forehead, a moustache that did not hide a well-cut mouth, and a clean-shaven, strongly-marked chin and contour. His hands were specially noticeable in that they were delicately formed and yet strong in appearance—such hands as born surgeons possess.

"Miss Kestell. Was that the name of the lady on your right? It must have been something you said then which made her look at me so severely. Who is she? I

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am a stranger here. I have known Mr. Heaton only a few months. We met last year at Zermatt, and he kindly asked me to come and see him in his lovely Vicarage."

"Every one about here knows Kestell père. There he sits, on the right; has general benevolence written on all his features, and, as far as I know, he deserves it. Has made heaps of money, 'oof,' our youngsters call it. I wish you literary men could find out the derivation of slang words. A slang Max Muller would benefit mankind. That's by the way. As for Kestell, he has got all the county business; knows everybody's affairs. He's getting old now, and has a cousin, Edward Hope, as partner; but he won't be equal to Kestell of Greystone. Through his wife, the latter is connected with some of our best families. Our county magnates enjoy a fame which you in London seldom get. He has only two daughters. The family lives a mile or so from here, in a house that was once a large mill, but is really, as Mrs. Eagle Bennison says, a 'gem,' now Rushbrook House. Elva Kestell, the one here this evening, is the elder. If the mother could take them out in London we should soon lose them, because money, you know, is better than beauty in these days. I don't admire Elva's face; but I've heard people say it is artistic. I don't know anything about art. The other, Amice, well, entre nous I never can be sure that she is quite sound in the upper storey — looks at you with great blue eyes that make one feel creepy. Now you know the family history."

"An epitome worthy of 'Lodge's Peerage,'" said Hoel. Then, looking across at Mr. Kestell, he added, "how comes it that he is such a rich man? One doesn't expect solicitors to be noted for riches."

"I've heard people make that remark before; but I suppose he has been lucky; owns some mines somewhere, and worked hard. When I look at Kestell I feel that he is a living reproach to me, because I was born lazy. I spend months here, because my cousin Eagle Bennison says I help him; but it's a matter on which we differ."

Hoel was really amused with this genial bachelor, whose face beamed with an expression of fun, or assumed one of the mock heroic. One could not be melancholy in his company; there were only a few who knew that under his stout, portly exterior beat a heart as soft as any woman's.

Here the Squire's voice was heard above the general din:

"Local option indeed! You can't trust townsfolk at all; they cannot forget their own interests. Money getting is the curse of the age."

Mr. Kestell's answer was distinct:

"You are a little hard, Squire, on men who must make their fortune or leave their children beggars."

"Kestell's right," said George Guthrie. "We who have fixed incomes are ready enough to throw stones at floating capital."

"Still it is true that our British conversation nearly always turns upon money," remarked Hoel. "Even our literature seems saturated with it. Ten novels out of twelve turn on somebody's fortune. Love is so mixed up with gold that we begin to doubt its separate existence."

"Here you speak in Elva's fashion. Miss Kestell has always visionary ideas about regenerating man and woman, and ends by——"

"By what?" said Hoel, who had been more interested in Elva's face than he had cared to show.

"By some very commonplace finale, which shows that mortals are quite incapable of carrying out their own theories. But I must introduce her to you."

"Miss Kestell has a well-formed head. I may be wrong, but I fancy that in London she would be run after."

"For her money," added George Guthrie. "No; I hope better things for my pupil; she and I have quarrelled ever since she was five years old."

When the gentlemen trooped into the drawing-room, looking somewhat sheepish and awkward, and eager to be lost in a crowd, yet quite unable to accomplish this feat, George Guthrie drew Mr. Fenner at once toward the corner where Elva was sitting.

"Elva, let me introduce Mr. Fenner to you. He believes in all the impossibilities of life, so I expect you will agree perfectly."

"On the contrary," said Hoel, taking a chair beside her, "I have a firm faith in the possible, not the impossible; but I do strongly object to making money the theme of every novel, newspaper article, and periodical peroration."

Hoel accompanied his words with a smile, which few women ever stood out against; but he noticed, being by nature a practised observant, that Miss Kestell's face remained cold.

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"There may be many worse things than the wish to make money, I think. Some persons, who care nothing about riches, are quite as insolent as the purse-proud men who disgust one with their ostentation."

This was such a curious answer to receive from a young lady in a drawing-room, that Hoel took a yet closer scrutiny of the speaker. Yes, she was more than picturesque; the head was well posed; the grey eyes were capable of varied expression; the mobile mouth and clear complexion were all noticeable; but Elva's nose not being of any classical form, prevented her from becoming noted for beauty. However, apart from looks there was a certain passion of life in the girl, which Hoel quickly noted, and which he thought very uncommon in one so young. He took the trouble of putting her crude thought into a better setting.

"You mean that insolence, not money getting, is the sin of the age. It is a new idea, and I shall think it over."

Elva was a woman, and as such she was flattered.

"I meant something like that; but," more hotly, "I am afraid to talk to a critic. I—I see your reviews in 'The Current Reader.'"

"It's weary work reviewing novels," said Hoel, little guessing that he was heaping up the sum of his iniquity.

"I suppose it must be from the way you spoke of a novel this week."

"Which one was that?" said Hoel, smiling, in spite of himself, at this girl's energy and unconscious sarcasm.

"'An Undine of To-day.' When I read it, Mr. Fenner, I pitied that poor author. I should think you will stop all his future ideas."

"Oh yes, I remember. But, honestly, you would not have me praise such crude work? The lady—you said his, but it is certainly a lady—must have written out of the fulness of a very young heart. You forget the sacredness of art; it is no easy thing to write a novel. And what would happen if critics praised the first daub of a would-be artist — called it equal to a Raphael?"

Elva had made the effort of appearing natural, so that it never entered Hoel's mind he was speaking to the author of the novel in question. None the less was there war in Elva's heart.

"But clever critics see the promise of future good work, and say so; at least, that is my idea of a good critic."

She had thrown down the glove in good earnest; but again she saw Hoel's aggravating smile.

"Have you read 'Amiel's Journal'? 'Plus on a de puissance intellectuelle, plus il est dangereux de mal prendre et de mal commencer la vie,' he says in it. Well, we critics are doing a kindness in preventing people from beginning badly their literary career. Honestly, if the diamond is still in its lump of blue clay, what pleasure does the world get from it? Unless the author can wash off the clay it is better to leave the diamond in its native bed."

"Wherever it is, the diamond is a diamond."

"I see you are bent on abusing critics, Miss Kestell. I must accept some blame for our tribe; but only partially. No one can write words that will have a moral value unless they have seen life under some of its most painful aspects. I don't mean the turbulent life of society scandals; but the personal life of conflict in the region of thought. A life of suffering, spiritual suffering, may transform people whom the world call prosperous. I fancy the author of the 'Undine' has never suffered, but has crude ideas of what she calls 'the soul.' By the way, what a useful word it is in the mouth of those who have hardly any understanding of the word, and but a slight belief in the reality."

Elva was going to answer vehemently; but at this moment Mrs. Eagle Bennison tripped towards them, showing a dissolving view of her pearly teeth.

"Mr. Fenner, are you giving some of your wisdom to dear Elva? If so, I don't like asking you to spare her; but I do want her to come and sing to us. You and Amice have such charming voices. My dear, how well your father looks this evening. Such a noble head, isn't it, Mr. Fenner? Come and sing 'Dreams,' Elva."

"Not to-night. I couldn't sing," said Elva, decidedly. "Miss Akister will do it much better than I can."

"Then do open the piano for her, Mr. Fenner," added Mrs. Bennison, when Miss Akister had consented, for she decided that Elva must not monopolise the lion.

Elva remained alone, but her thoughts were busy.

"He talks beautifully; but—no, I am sure he has not suffered. I can see that in his calm, handsome face. He thinks a great deal of himself and fancies he is always right."

"Aren't you going to say anything to

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me?" said a voice close behind her. It was Walter Akister.

Betta, his sister, was so shy and awkward that she seldom mixed in the society of Rushbrook, having to keep all her energies for the scientific friends of her father; but Walter, who had the misfortune to be both unpolished and queer-tempered, often strolled down to the valley and spent a good deal of time on the lawn of Rushbrook House in the summer, and on the pools during skating time. Only George Guthrie had noticed the seeds of his admiration for Elva. Certainly she was unaware of it, and would have laughed the idea to scorn. Walter had none of the glamour in which a son of a nobleman is supposed to be usually enveloped; and as for the word lover, it was almost impossible for a girl, with any romantic tendencies, to associate it with Walter Akister; but, unfortunately, he constantly looked upon himself in this light, without having the least power of showing it. Even now, though he thought Elva looking beautiful, his tone was one of rough fellowship more than one mixed with any tender feeling.

"I can't speak across a room," said Elva, not taking the trouble even to smile.

Walter was easily repulsed, or, rather, he imagined sarcasm where none was intended. Elva had no idea of repulsing him any more than if a boy of twelve had addressed her. She did not understand his passionate nature.

"I'm going to London to-morrow, can I do anything for you? What's that fellow been saying to you?"

"Mr. Hoel Fenner is a literary man."

Elva did not quite like Walter Akister's tone.

"They're all such conceited stuck-up people."

"Please don't talk, there's your sister beginning to sing."

Walter moved away with a frown on his face. He was angry with Elva and angry with himself, and yet he could not accuse her of anything unusual. Amice always listened to him patiently, but Elva never pretended to encourage his visits.

The party broke up early, Mr. Kestell being the first to make a move, as he could bring forward a delicate wife as an excuse. In the hall Elva found Mr. Fenner standing close by her to help her with her wraps, whilst the Vicar was enveloping his sister in sundry shawls as they were walking home. Whilst waiting for the carriage, Hoel again admired Mr. Kestell's noble head. No wonder, thought he, that his daughter is so good-looking. Elva meant to keep silence, but her father remarked:

"I shall be delighted if Mr. Heaton will bring you to see our views, that is, if you are making any stay here."

Elva softly stamped her foot with impatience. How very tiresome her father was to ask this stranger!

"Thank you, but my stay is short here; still, I think I have seldom seen a prettier neighbourhood. It combines, as a guide-book would say, 'perfect nature and perfect art.'"

"Then you are not entirely in love with pavements?"

"No, indeed, I used to live in the country as a boy, but one gets accustomed to one's surroundings. Still, I know some country fellows who cannot get reconciled to London. I made the acquaintance of one a little while ago; he is very clever, and is mastering all sorts of things in his spare time, which can only be of use to him in London, and yet he told me the craving for country life was his greatest hindrance."

"I should like to know that man," said Elva, forgetting her wrath. "I could never bear to live in London."

"By the way, I think Jesse Vicary said he came from this county."

"Jesse Vicary! We know him quite well, his sister is——"

"Elva, here is the carriage, make haste," said Mr. Kestell, quickly drawing his daughter away, so that Hoel could only bow and turn away.

Elva, once comfortably seated by her father's side, put her arm through his, and fell into a meditation, so she did not notice Mr. Kestell's unusual silence.

Outside the beautiful valley was bathed in soft light, every now and then the overhanging trees plunged them into deep shadow; then, when they emerged into a clearing, they could see the glimmer of the silent pools they were passing.

"Papa, isn't Rushbrook a perfect place; can you wonder that Jesse Vicary pines for it?"

There was no answer, and Elva turned quickly towards her father; his face expressed deep thought, and he did not seem to have heard her.

"Papa, what are you thinking of? Don't ask Mr. Hoel Fenner to Rushbrook. I don't like him."

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Mr. Kestell was now all attention.

"I beg your pardon, dear. I was thinking of something Lord Cartmel wanted done for him. Mr. Hoel Fenner, oh, certainly not, I do not much care about these literary lions; they suit Mrs. Eagle Bennison, however."

Mr. Kestell laughed, and Elva wondered why his laugh sounded a little joyless.

"Poor old dad, you are tired; you hate parties. Well, here is our own dear pool."

"And make haste to bed, child, so as not to lose your roses and become as pale as Amice. Good night."

ABOUT CASTE.

When recently describing "The Mild Hindu,"* we promised, with the editor's permission, to give some further notes on the subject of Caste, which is the social basis of Hinduism.

As we then explained, the word is of Portuguese origin, "casta" having been applied by the early Portuguese conquerors to designate the peculiar divisions which they observed among the people. The Indian word is "jati," and "jatibheda" means the distinction of races. In what follows we take the authorities we have previously quoted; and especially Mr. W. J. Wilkins's work on "Modern Hinduism."

In the first place, we are not to suppose that caste, any more than pride of birth, is, or has always been, confined to the Hindus. The ancient Egyptians had a very clearly-defined caste system, and the trade-guilds of mediæval Europe reflected the same principle. It is one of heredity of faculty, or sanctity, or rank, or occupation; but it is not necessarily, and certainly does not now, imply any difference of race. In the beginning, however, it is probable that caste in India had a racial basis.

There are four great parent Castes: the Brahman, theoretically sprung from the mouth of Brahma; the Kshatriya, sprung from his arms; the Vaishya, sprung from his thigh; and the Sudra, sprung from his feet. To Brahmans, according to the Dharma-Shastra of Manu, were confided the duties of reading the Vedas, of teaching, sacrificing, and assisting others to sacrifice, of giving alms, and the very pleasing one of receiving gifts. To the Kshatriya, the duties assigned were, to defend the people, to give alms, to sacrifice, to read the Vedas, and to shun women. To the Vaishya the duties assigned were, to keep herds of cattle, to bestow charity, to sacrifice, to lend money at interest, and to carry on trade. To the Sudras it was assigned to serve all other superior Castes without depreciating their worth. Thus, at the beginning, we see a sharp division into the priestly and scholarly class; the soldier and gentleman class; the farmer and trading class; and the substratum of hewers of wood and drawers of water—the "plebs" of the Roman, the "churls" of the Saxon races.

There is another account of the fourfold origin of the Hindu race—that the castes sprang from the four Vedas; but that which we have given is the one most commonly cited.

In Muir's "Old Sanskrit Texts" we have a more scientific explanation of the chief caste. The religious developement of India is attached through the course of three thousand years to the word Brahma. This conception might be taken as the standard for estimating the progress of thought directed to divine things, as at every step taken by the latter it has gained a new form; while at the same time it has always embraced in itself the highest acquisition of the nation. The original signification of the word Brahma, as we easily discover in the Vedic hymns, is that of prayer—not praise or thanksgiving, but the invocation which, with the force of the will directed to God, seeks to draw Him to itself and to receive satisfaction from Him. From this oldest sense and form of Brahma was formed the masculine noun Brahma, which was the designation of those who pronounced the prayers, or performed the sacred ceremonies; and in nearly all the passages of the Rig Veda, in which it was thought that this word must refer to the Brahminical caste, this more extended sense must be substituted for the other more limited one. From this sense of the word Brahma, nothing was more natural than to convert this offerer of prayer into a particular description of the sacrificial priest; and so soon as the ritual began to be fixed, the functions which before were united in a single person, who both prayed to the gods and sacrificed to them, became separated, and a priesthood interposed itself between man and God. In many places of the liturgical and legal books the promise of every

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Volume I., Third Series, page 390.

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blessing is attached to the maintenance of a priest by the king. Inasmuch as he supports and honours the priest, the latter ensures to him the favour of the gods. So it was that the caste of the Brahmans arose and attained to power and consideration. First they were only the single domestic priests of the kings; then the dignity became hereditary in certain families; finally a union, occasioned by similarity of interests of these families in one larger community, was effected; and all this in reciprocal action with the progress made in other respects by theological doctrine and religious worship.

This theory, then, proceeds on the assumption that in process of time the spiritual authority came to exceed that of the temporal, and the position of the kings and priests was reversed. "If," says the work we have just quoted, "if we take into account the intellectual and moral influence which this class possessed, in virtue of the prerogative conceded to or usurped by them, and the religious feelings of the people, it is not difficult to comprehend how, in such a period of transition, powerful communities should arise amongst the domestic priests of petty kings and their families, should attain to the highest importance in every department of life, and should grow into a caste, which, like the ecclesiastical orders of the middle ages of Christianity, began to look upon secular authority as an effluence from the fulness of their power, to be conferred at their will; and how, on the other hand, the numerous Royal families should sink down into a nobility which possessed, indeed, the sole right to the kingly dignity; but at the same time, when elected by the people, required inauguration in order to their recognition by the priesthood, and were enforced above all things to employ only Brahmans as their counsellors"

Here we have a scientific explanation of the probable origin of the two highest castes—the priests and warriors; and it is not difficult to see how the creation of a third caste of cultivators and merchants would be indispensable. As for the fourth caste, the Sudras, it is noticeable that they differ from all the others in one important respect: they are not permitted to sacrifice, or to read the Vedas. It is therefore conceived that they were not originally part of the Hindu system which came from the north, but were engrafted into it, and were originally either the Aborigines of the country, or the descendants of previous invaders. At any rate, the Sudras represent a conquered race, and have remained servile.

The reader has now both the traditionary and the scientific explanation of the origin of caste, and can have no difficulty in recognising that which is the more probable.

In the Scripture of Manu it is written: "Three Castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaishya are twice-born; the fourth, the Sudra, once-born; there is no fifth." Then the writing declares as outcasts the descendants of mixed marriages of members of the four castes—such offspring being regarded by Manu as the offscouring of the earth. A list of out-caste tribes is given, with their pedigrees, which shows that they are all the descendants of some who were once in the castes. Such people are collectively called Dasyas—or slaves.

Caste as described in the Sacred Books is not as it now exists, however rigidly the sacred injunctions and definitions may have once been observed. The Brahman is still superior to all; but it may be doubted if any Brahman would proceed on the assumption of the Dharma-Shastra, that he is superior to all law, even to moral law, when it clashes with his worldly interests.

Nor is the intermarriage of castes altogether prohibited by custom, however it may be by precept. As a matter of fact, the members of different castes married in the time of Manu, perhaps even more freely than now, for in olden time, if a man of one caste took a wife from another caste, the punishment did not fall upon the offenders, but upon the children, who were reduced below the level of the lowest caste of their parents. But, nowadays, it is the parent who loses caste by marrying beneath him.

Meanwhile, in Bengal, the pure Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas are almost extinct, and of the four original castes only the Brahmans and Sudras now remain. But the present caste of Sudras consists really of the descendants of mixed castes, according to the old law by which the children of mixed marriages descended to a caste below that of the lowest of the two parents. This system is changed now, as we have said; but how it operated of old may be seen in the classification of the Vaidya and Kayastha sub-castes, which now include the most of the well-to-do

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Hindus in Bengal, as Sudras. The Vaidyas are supposed to be the descendants of the offspring of a Brahman father and Vaishya mother; and the Kayastha are supposed to be descended from a Vaishya father and a Sudra mother. Both rank as Sudras, as do also the Chandala—the lowest caste of all—descended from a Sudra father and a Brahman mother.

Theoretically everywhere, and practically in a great many places, the Brahman remains supreme; but only among the very ignorant is he regarded as almost divine. All Brahmans, of course, are not priests; but this caste supplies the priesthood. The Pojari Brahmans are those who perform religious services for payment; and they are rather contemptuously looked down upon by their fellow Brahmans. The Guru, whose functions were explained in our previous article, is often, but not necessarily, a Brahman. When he is a Brahman, he is a very important person indeed, and receives a large amount of reverence. What we mean is, that Brahmans are respected for their birth, not for their employment; and that the respect among low-caste people is profound. They have been known to lift the dust from off a Brahman's feet, and place it upon their heads, and even to drink the water in which a Brahman's feet have been washed. The sanctity of the superior being may have some charm, but it is more often the fear of his curse, and of his supposed influence with the gods, that moves the baser vessel.

According to the Sacred Books, there are four stages in the Brahman's life to be systematically observed with piety; that is—the Brahmachari, or student-stage, when he is to engage in religious exercises from dawn till dewy eve, practise many abstinences, and undergo many penances; the Ghrihastha, or householder stage, when he chooses a wife with much pains, and has to practise many minute and laborious rites and ceremonies too tedious to narrate; the Vanaprastha, or meditative stage, when, at the approach of old age, he has to leave family and worldly affairs, go forth into the wilderness, live on herbs and roots, and spend his time in reading the Vedas, in acts of penance, and in continuous meditation; the Sanyasi, or ascetic stage, when further austerities are prescribed, but meditation is the chief employment.

It is the exception now for the Brahman to follow all the directions for all those four periods. The system has been modified greatly, although there are still Brahmans, who, when growing old and infirm, will hand over their property to their sons, and betake themselves to Benares, or some other sacred spot, there to await their end in peaceful inertia. As a general rule, it may be said that the Brahmans living in towns are less careful of the laws of Manu than are those living in the country, where superstition is stronger.

Each caste has its district "Dal," or committee, which considers any reported violation of the caste rules, and pronounces sentence in case of proof. The offender must either submit to the punishment decreed, or be outcasted. In the latter case, none of the members of the caste will visit him, or eat with him, or allow their sons to marry into his family. The Dals, however, differ in rigour; and those of Calcutta permit their members to violate rules which are held severely binding elsewhere. This explains why some Hindus will sit down at table with Europeans, while others think themselves defiled if they are even touched by a European. Again, the voyage to Europe, which once meant ostracism, may now be expiated in many of the Dals by a very mild process of purification. Mr. Wilkins, indeed, says that in Bengal, with the exception of a few of the more orthodox Dals, Hindus may do almost anything they wish, except receive Christian baptism; and that even as regards that, some of the pundits have argued that there is nothing against it in their scriptures.

The authority of the Dal, nevertheless, remains very potent, and can, in some cases, rise superior to civil law. Thus, by civil law in India, it has been enacted that a Hindu widow may re-marry; yet, the power of prejudice wielded by the Dals has rendered this law practically a dead-letter.

In fact, it is not easy to understand how the caste system draws its distinctions. The Vaidyas and Kayasthas of Bengal are by caste-law Sudras. Yet they are regarded as gentlemen, and Brahmans associate with them on equal terms, except that they will not eat with them nor intermarry with them. But a Brahman will drink water which has been brought by Vaidya water-carriers, although he is forbidden to drink water from a vessel that has been touched by people of an inferior caste.

Again, the Bengal Brahmans are divided

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into several Srenies, or classes, such as Rauries, Barenders, Vaidiks, and Saptasatis, with subdivisions of these, such as Kulins, Srotiyas, and Vangsajas. The subdivisions will exchange hospitalities, but will not intermarry. The Srenies will do neither.

"Sometimes," says Mr. Wilkins, "in a European household, in India, these caste distinctions present themselves in a ludicrous light. If a Hindu servant is sent for anything, from a child to a letter, that is in the hands of a low-caste servant, the article cannot be taken direct from the hand of the one who has it. It must be laid down on the ground or whatever is near, and taken up by the other. There must be no personal contact, nor must they touch the same article while the hand of the low-caste person is upon it, or they are defiled.

"Hindu servants will not object to assist in removing a piece of furniture with Christians; but if a sweeper or other low-caste man attempts to touch it, they will at once turn away. Of course it often happens that when a man does not wish to do anything, or is ordered to do what he regards as the work of another servant, he pleads caste difficulties where these rules do not at all apply."

Ostracism, by decree of the Dal, is not necessarily permanent. That is to say, a man who has been excommunicated may often regain admission to his caste by a money payment to provide a feast for the dead, or by undergoing some purifying ceremonies.

When we come to an attempt at classifying caste the statistics are bewildering. Thus, Dr. Wilson, who filled two portly volumes with details of the Brahman caste alone, divides this leading caste into twenty-five classes. But the subdivisions of these classes are infinite; and it was estimated by Sherring—author of "Hindu Tribes and Castes"—that there are one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six separate Brahminical tribes.

Popularly, the Brahmans are divided into ten great Septs—five on the north and five on the south of the Vindhya mountains; but the very first of the northern Septs consists, according to the Pundit Radha Krishna, of four hundred and sixty-nine classes.

These several varieties of the Brahman caste are, although all wearing "the Sacred Thread," and calling themselves "twice-born," really separate castes as far as social relations are concerned. There is no more fellowship between them than there is between some Brahmans and some Kshatriyas (or Rajputs, as they are generally called now). The sacred caste, indeed, is no longer a compact unit; Brahmans follow every employment, from the priests of Benares and the pundits of Behar to the potato-growing peasants of Orissa.

Sir W. W. Hunter informs us that, in many parts of India, Brahmans may now be found earning their livelihood as porters, shepherds, cultivators, potters, and fishermen, alongside of others who would rather starve than demean themselves by manual labour, or touch food prepared by a man of another caste.

The same writer says that in 1864 he saw a Brahman felon trying to starve himself to death on account of scruples as to whether the birthplace of a North-Western Brahman, who had cooked his food, was of equal sanctity with his own birthplace.

The mixed castes still form the great body of the Hindoo population, and these mixed castes are practically trade-guilds as well as social organisations. In the census returns of 1881, no fewer than one hundred different castes are mentioned in Bengal alone; and according to this census report we learn that at least thirty castes are represented in every community in the province—other districts, of course, having a larger assortment. Taking these thirty indispensable castes, we find the population made up thus: The Brahman, who has a home in every hamlet either as priest or teacher, or in some superior service; the Rajput (Kshatriya) plays a similar secular part; the Baniya is the money-lender; the Barhi is the carpenter, and the Teli is the oilman, without whom no village can get along; the Chamar skins the cattle and mends the shoes of the people, while his wife officiates as midwife; the Dhobi is the washerman, and the Napit is the barber; the Karmakar is the blacksmith; the Kumhar the potter; the Madak and the Kandu are the confectioners and cooks; the Sunri sells wine, and the Barni and Tamoli prepare and sell the pan-leaf and betel-nut, so beloved of natives; the Tanti and Jugi weave the clothes for the village; the Mali supplies vegetables, as also plumes for the local shrine, and the Dom and Hari are the scavengers and the general sanitary supervisors. Besides these there will be the Kaibartha farmer, the

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Gwalla cow-keeper, the Mallah boatman, the Tevi fisherman, the Kahar palkie-bearer, the Kayastha accountant and scribe, and the Bhuinya and the Khawar labourers and field hands.

Such are some of the complexities of the Hindu community—the caste system, which had an ethical basis, resolving itself now very much into a classification of employments, divided by jealous barriers and religious prejudices.

But besides subdivision into new castes, there is always a process of amalgamation and elevation going on. Thus the Rajputs (or old Kshatriyas), who number five hundred and ninety separate tribes, in different parts of India, have absorbed many warlike non-Aryan tribes in outlying provinces, and large bodies of aliens are said to have been, from time to time, incorporated with the Brahmans. The lower castes again have frequently changed their occupations, and raised themselves in the social scale. The old Vaishyas have handed over the tillage of the soil to the Sudras, and have become the merchants and bankers of India. In Southern India the goldsmith caste resisted the claims of the Brahmans to be the true spiritual guides, and re-naming themselves Acharyas, or religious teachers, assumed the sacred thread. The Dattas, a division of the Kayastha or water-caste of Bengal, once laid claim to rank next after the Brahmans, and although they did not succeed in it, they did renounce the former low position they had occupied in Hindu classification. The Shabras, a degraded caste of Eastern Bengal, formerly engaged in spirit-selling, have raised themselves into a respectable agricultural caste; and the Telis, an oil-pressing caste of Dacca, have forsaken their hereditary calling, and become important grain-merchants and bankers.

It is in these changes that we see what Sir William Hunter calls the plasticity, as well as the rigidity, of caste. "Its plasticity has enabled caste to adapt itself to widely-separated stages of social progress, and to incorporate the various ethnical elements which make up the Indian people. Its rigidity has given strength and permanence to the corporate body thus formed. Hinduism is internally loosely coherent, but it has great powers of resistance to external pressure. Each caste is to some extent a trade-guild, a mutual assurance society, and a religious sect. As a trade-union, it insists upon the proper training of the youth of its craft; regulates the wages of its members; deals with trade-delinquents; and promotes good-fellowship by social gatherings. The famous fabrics of mediæval India, and the chief local industries in our own day, were developed under the supervision of caste or trade-guilds of this sort. Such guilds may still be found in many parts of India, but not always with the same complete developement."

In fact, both the rigour and the general character of the caste system have undergone much modification through time, and especially under the English occupation. The principles which it embodies, and the prejudices which it fosters, cannot be eradicated, save by slow gradation; but the process is afoot, although we must not forget that one of the alleged causes of the last awful mutiny in India was the false report that the English Government intended to abolish caste. The English Government will never intend or attempt anything of the sort; but English example and intercourse may do what neither decree nor legislation would ever do. Hindu gentlemen are now coming freely among us, to study, to travel, and for trade. They go back more or less Europeanised in feeling and habit; and it is this sort of leaven which will probably have more effect in destroying caste, than all the efforts of Christian missionaries. Indeed, the caste prejudice is often ludicrously preserved by Hindu converts to Christianity.

No nation can progress properly with such trammels and barriers as a caste preserves; and the best friends of India—those who look forward to her taking a great and glorious part in human history—are those who most ardently desire its abolition. It has been a serviceable system, but it has outlived its usefulness, and is now an anachronism.

FROM AFAR.

Go thou thy way. I do not seek to share
  The path which God hath girt with flowers for thee,
It lies before thee wrapped in sunshine fair,
  To know thee happy is enough for me.
If thou art safe, and sheltered in the ark
  Of blessed home from earthly stress and strife,
It is enough for me, far off, to mark
  God's smile, and love's, complete thy noble life.
It is enough for me to see thee share
  Life's banquet with thy dearest, crowned with flowers;
No sigh of mine shall vex the scented air,
  No tear of mine shall mar thy happy hours.
I ask not for the children's bread, nor crumb
Cast to the dog whose love, like mine, is dumb!

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I ask for nothing, dear, but this—but this—
Free leave to love thee all my lone life through;
But if God set a limit to thy bliss,
And change joy's roses to grief's bitter rue,
Then give me leave to whisper in thine ear
Of love that lingers in a faithful heart,
That holds thee, lorn and lonely, dearest—dear,
Of love, whose idol and whose crown thou art!
Nay, nay, I dream! Shall I forecast for thee
Tears and a stricken heart? Now God forbid!
I love thee, dear, it is enough for me.—
What lies within the solemn future hid,
Who knows? I know whate'er the years bring round
To thee and me, love will be faithful found!

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

A COMING TYPE.

I HAVE lately given an account of the disappearance of Samuel Dingley, and men of his character, from the life of rural England. He and his type are virtually gone, and, if we are to put any faith in the utterances of a certain school of social reformers, no successor will arise to take his place. According to these, the fertile fields of England must soon revert to Nature, and become swamp, and heath, and forest, the haunt of the otter, the bittern, and the red-deer, while their former inhabitants labour at starvation wage in the towns, when they are not in receipt of union relief. Now and then a high official, armed cap-à-pie with those statistical weapons, which may or may not be weapons of proof, breaks a lance with these dismal prophets; but, let him prove his point ever so clearly, he will never bring conviction to their souls, seeing that this would mean the upsetting of their darling theories. It may be granted that propositions based on statistics alone should be received with caution; but propositions, like those of the platform fanatic, should never be received at all if one wants to get at the truth of the matter in question.

To do the social reformer justice, he is not satisfied merely with standing up and declaring that there is an evil, namely, the unnatural growth of the town population at the expense of the country village. He is quite ready to propound a remedy, nay, a dozen remedies, for the mischief. He supports numerous societies, each with chairman, vice-chairman, and paid secretary, to carry out his ideas; and, with regard to the evil in question, he is loud of speech in favour of "leading back the working-classes from the stifling town alley to the fresh air of the country, and fixing them on the soil."

The picture he draws of a sturdy territorial democracy is a fascinating one, and one very likely to dazzle the eyes of inexperience; but my late observations down at Shillingbury taught me that it is for the most part misleading, and that disappointment will certainly wait upon those who take action believing it to be correct. It is a thousand pities that the theorists do not in this instance condescend to be practical for once in a way, and to start by acquiring a little truthful information upon one or two matters which must be important factors in any problems of "leading" or "fixing" they may be about to consider.

There is much good work to be done in other places beside the platform — that structure, indeed, often appears to be overweighted and over-crowded—and a contingent of workers of both sexes might very well be spared to go down into the Midlands or Eastern Counties and collect information on such subjects as these: First, whether there is anything like land-hunger among the peasants who are yet left in the country. Second, whether a life of toil on a patch of ground can be held up in colours alluring enough to entice out of the towns those who are there earning only a scanty living. And, third, whether the English labourer, urban as well as rural, after hearing a correct description of that Continental system of small farms, which is generally held up as the prime panacea, has exhibited any desire to live the life which the French or Belgian peasant lives.

Judging, however, from the spirit in which faddists of all schools treat the views of their opponents, there is little hope that such an embassy as the one suggested above will ever be sent; or, if sent, that its report would help the solution of the matter in hand. Some one with a taste for paradox once declared that the only people to make a movement march are those who steadily refuse to admit that there is any other side to a question beside the one they advocate. Whether our social reformers are making their movement march or not, I have no means of knowing; but they are certainly doing their best to realise the ideal of the paradoxical person quoted above.

One day during my late visit to Shillingbury I went over to Pudsey Heath, a favourite natural history hunting ground of mine in former days, and as I walked back I fell into that not over cheerful

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mood which so often ensues when one re-seeks the haunts of one's youth and sets to work contrasting the present with the past. Suddenly I came upon a stalwart young fellow, hoeing in leisurely fashion amongst the green wheat of the field on which I was trespassing From the evidence of my nose I gathered that he had recently been smoking; but there was no sign of a pipe when I came up. I noticed, however, a stealthy movement of his hand towards his pocket, and there was a lowering look in his eye as if he resented my interruption; though why a man shouldn't smoke while wheat hoeing I could not understand, supposing, of course, that he could afford to pay for his tobacco.

I remarked that it was a fine day—as a matter of fact it was nothing of the kind—and the young man grunted, and gave me a sidelong glance out of the corner of his eye. I asked him several commonplace questions; but I only got back monosyllabic answers. I showed that I knew something about the district, and of farming as well, and this had the effect of stopping the young man's mouth entirely. At last, trifling to a certain extent with strict veracity, I stated that I was come into these parts to write a report for a London journal as to the condition of the labouring classes, and this statement loosened his tongue. The young man had evidently a due sense of the dignity and importance of the modern newspaper press.

In spite of the ready working of my talisman, I saw that I must feel my way along very delicately. I was fully conscious that I stood in the presence of one of my new masters, one of those who in future will call the tune while I pay the piper; and I remembered also that the normal attitude of the rustic mind is one of suspicion. I began artfully by talking about the crops, remarking what fine promise of harvest there was in the wheat he was hoeing, and then went on to say that I supposed, before long, he himself would be hoeing his own wheat on his own ground.

Thomas Kirk, for this I understand was the young man's name, straightened his back and bent on the handle of his hoe preparatory to conversation.

"Ah! I see what tale you ha' got hold on," he began. "You're come down about these here allotments."

I replied that, though the question of allotments was not the prime cause of my journey into those parts, yet it was one in which I had ever taken the deepest interest, and that I looked to the general adoption of the system as the one solution of our present social and industrial difficulties. In short, I found myself talking in such a strain as would have led any one to believe that I passed most of my time in the company of social reformers of the school already alluded to.

"Ah, you folks up in London may know a sight about most things; but if that's all you know about allotments, you ha' got summut to learn yet," said Thomas Kirk. "'T 'pear to me to be a rum 'un as them folks as live in town and don't know whate from barley—you ain't such a big fule as most on 'em, you ain't—should know so much better what is good for us 'an we know ourselves."

I confess that, more than once, this very same idea had struck me while listening to the discourse of certain good friends of mine. On one occasion I ventured to put it forward; but I was immediately crushed by the remark that I was a retrogressive advocate of a policy of laissez faire, so I lapsed into silence.

"Just afore last 'lection time there was a sight o' talk about 'em, and there was a lot o' chaps as was fules enough to think as they would get a bit o' land for nothin'. I wouldn't mind havin' an allotment at that rate," said Thomas, with a bellow of laughter at the wit of his remark.

"But what a man gets for nothing is seldom any good to him," I remarked. "What we get by hard work is what benefits us."

"I don't hold with that nohow," said Thomas, making a vicious chop at a thistle. "There's Billy Dawes, as kept a little shop down town, had a nice little bit o' money left him from a brother o' his as went to the North. Bill ha' gav' up his shop, and don't do nothin' from one week's end to another. He got his two pound a week for nothin', as you say, and I can't see as it ha' done him any harm; and there's Squire Winsor, he get his rent without workin' for it, and the Parson, he take his tithe and do 'mazin little work, as far as I can see."

I somehow felt that Thomas was getting the better of me on this particular ground; so I harked back to the now historic battle cry of "Three acres and a cow," giving him a general outline of the wonderful results achieved by the hard-working peasantry of other lands. "But," I

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remarked, by way of qualification, "it is only done by very hard work. The people I have been telling you about work much harder, I fancy, than most English labourers."

"That's the ticket," said Thomas. "Them as never did a stroke o' work in their lives are allus a tellin' of us what a fine thing hard work is. I ain't over fond o' hard work myself; no more would you be if you took a turn at grass cuttin' to mow an acre a day."

"But it makes all the difference," I said, "whether you work for yourself or for another man."

"'Tain't no good working for yourself if you don't get nothin' for your labour. There's them chaps over at Newton Sodbury, they ha' all on 'em got allotments, and one on 'em told me t'other day as, arter workin' all his spare time when he might ha' been a sittin' a doin' o' nothin', and spendin' nobody knows what over seed, he sold his crop o' taters for half-a-sovereign. They can grow taters down in the Fens cheaper 'an we can grow 'em here, so what's the use of our sweatin' ourselves for nothin'?"

This speech proved William to be a political economist. Perhaps, indeed, he had attained to that level of intelligence without knowing it. His doctrines were as sound as anything one could ever hear at a Cobden Club dinner. It had been a puzzle to me, before this, how it was that so many of the social reformers I had met were of the straitest and most scientific of Cobdenites as far as principles went; but only so far. Whenever the promotion of any of their pet schemes called for the adoption of some practice diametrically opposed to the principles above named, they took up this practice without a blush.

For instance, those reformers of whom I have already spoken, in their favourite scheme of "fixing the labourer on the soil," cast to the winds the principle that we should work to produce whatever our surrounding most favours. Well primed with the last sixpenny hand-book on spade husbandry, they ideally put the labourer in possession of his patch of ground; and then—also ideally—set him to work to make his fortune by cultivating mustard and cress, or sun-flowers, or asparagus, or gooseberries, or some other such crop as easily produced and as easily taken to market.

I fully expect before long to come across a hand-book demonstrating that the way out of our present condition of congestion and depression will only be found in the cultivation of sugar and cotton in the southern counties, and of the vine and the olive on the Welsh hills.

"And you was a talkin' about the people over the water, in foreign parts. If a man can get a livin' off an acre o' land it must be very different land, or they must have very different weather to what we have here. You ha' been in them parts, I suppose, and can tell us how they manage it."

"I don't think the soil is better, but there is certainly more sunshine."

"Ah, that's just what it is. If you get sun, you can grow anything. But, even as it is, they have to work pretty hard, haven't they?"

I replied in the affirmative, and gave Thomas Kirk an account of the working day of the French or Belgian peasant and his wife; of the strenuous toil which began before sunrise, and lasted till after sunset; of the dogged resolve that not a day should pass without a few pence being added to the family hoard; of the purse that was always made for the daughter's marriage; and of the shelter and support for which the parent or grandparent never asked in vain. Thomas asked me many questions on every conceivable point, and seemed only moderately satisfied with the answers I returned; and he gave a sniff of contempt, I fancied, when I told him that the institution of "out-door relief" was unknown in France. Probably he deemed it a very poor sort of country, where a man abstained from beer and tobacco in order to support his father and mother, as compared with his own, where he can, with a little perseverance, cast that burthen upon the shoulders of the community.

I tried hard to induce Thomas Kirk to let me know whither his ambition was tending, and what might be the chief objects of his desire; but I found it hard to get anything like a positive statement from him. On one point, a negative one, he was quite decided. I asked him whether, at the next election, he would be willing to vote for any candidate who would be ready to support a bill for "Continentalising" our rural districts, by bringing him and his like into the condition of the French peasant, whose life I had just described. Thomas looked at me steadily for a minute or two, as if he thought I was

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joking, and then said that he didn't know a sight about laws, and them as made 'em; but one thing he did know, and this was that no Member o' Parliament would ever make him work fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, whether he was to work for a master, or for himself.

I have several times, since my interview with him, fancied that Thomas Kirk, agricultural labourer though he was, was not well enough acquainted with the prick of poverty to be of much service to my friends of the platform. He was well clad; his healthy face and sturdy frame told no tale of want of food; he could afford the luxury of a whiff of tobacco, and his work, as he chopped leisurely at the thistles and docks in that fresh April air, seemed little more than pleasant exercise. His position certainly is not an ideal one. The element of Socialism in the administration of the Poor Law—the tacitly acknowledged principle of which is, that the man who is idle and drunken enough to fall into want, may call upon his thrifty and sober fellow-citizens to support him—has crushed out of him that sturdy spirit of independence which was once supposed to be so essentially English. If we could be sure that he would regain this through the possession of one, two, or ten acres of land, in Heaven's name let him have them. Thomas Kirk, as I found him, does not particularly object to a sauntering kind of labour, for a low rate of wages, and he will never make a struggle for independence if he sees that independence is only to be obtained by hard work.

As I said good-bye to Thomas and walked away, I saw plainly that he was not a social reformer of the newest pattern. He exhibited an obsolete desire to know all about the special remedy which his town friends are now prescribing for him before he would say that it was good or bad, herein showing his inferiority to those ladies and gentlemen who, having lived in Bloomsbury or St. John's Wood all their lives, naturally know everything about rural economy. There is no hesitation about them. The plan which fits their theory is the right one, and there is no more to be said in the matter. There is, however, one little flaw in the mainspring of this wonderful machine of theirs, which will soon become apparent, should the machine ever be set in motion. They assume that, when Thomas Kirk is wound up and set going on his new patch of land, he will fall to and work his fourteen hours a day just like Jacques Bonhomme on the other side of the Channel; but, bearing in mind the talk I had with him that day in the wheat field, this assumption appears to be a very bold one, and one which I should refuse to grant—even to a lady social reformer.

Since my return to town I have often wondered how it is that some of these well-meaning restless people do not leave awhile their platforms and preaching, and try to make an impression, by practical illustration, on John Bull's stolid brain. They are always girding at him for his obtuseness and insensibility to ideas, and being such an one as he is, what wonder is there that he should decline to accept their theories, however symmetrically constructed? Let them, for once, descend to practice. Let a married couple out of their ranks hire a cottage and the requisite quantity of land, and go and cultivate it, and live as they are always exhorting Thomas Kirk to live. At the end of two years, let them give to the world their experience, both as to how they liked the life, and what manner of balance-sheet they have to show. A practical example like this will come within the range of John Bull's powers of perception, and will help their movement on more than ten years of speech-making, if it prove successful, and they, at all events, ought to have no doubt as to its success. I could name several couples amongst the advanced thinkers of my acquaintance who are by no means deficient in physical power, albeit a little pasty-faced and smoke-dried through long residence in London, and for them the experiment suggested above would be little more than a prolonged country holiday, with a sense of duty fulfilled thrown in. But I fear, in spite of all our progress, that people nowadays take to preaching in preference to practice quite as readily as they did in the reign of King Solomon.

IN A GONDOLA.

"Góndola, Signor, Góndola!" That is the cry from a dozen brown, hearty throats, at the wayfarer who approaches the side of the embankment by the Doge's Palace in Venice. This is the prime gondola-stand of the city. Some of the boats are beautiful creatures. You know a perfect gondola is supposed to be animate; and

therefore I may discuss it as if it were a living being. The silvery glitter of the prow, or "ferro," with its big metal hatchet, cloven in the shape of teeth, curves towards you like the stately head of a swan. Then the wood-work of your cabin, though black as coal, is carved not inelegantly. A brazen coronet, mounted in front of the cabin, will give you a patent of nobility as long as you use the gondola. And if it is cold, as it well knows how to be in Venice ere the summer suns blaze upon the water, the black, woolly sheepskin, which is part of the furniture of a respectable boat, may help to keep you warm.

A moment after you have taken your seat, you feel yourself swinging smoothly round; and you are fairly afloat in the lagoon. At first the sensation is a little odd. A gondola, you know, is built with a designed lean to one side. It is also very thin in the boards; and its curve is so precise, that only the smallest possible extent of the middle outer framework lies on the water. You sit in it, therefore, as if you were in the hollow of a feather which has fallen concavely into a pool. And your sinewy, good-natured oarsman finds it so easy to propel you, thus lightly poised, that he sings withal as he works, shows his teeth to you in an amiable grin whenever you look his way, and proffers all the information about Venice and her magnificence that it is in the power of a simple, unlettered, but home-bred Venetian to afford.

Soon, however, the odd sensation is quite displaced. The awful thought that there was some likelihood of "mal de mer" in a gondola, and on water calm as a farmyard duck-pond, passes away for good and all. The fascination of the gentle see-saw grows stronger every moment; and as, stretched at full length, with your head reclining against the sheepskin, and your feet resting on the foot-stool at the other extremity of the cabin, you glide up the waterways and down them, you begin that love for Venice which, in a week or two, will, as sure as death, develope into infatuation.

Some day, it is to be hoped, the municipality of Venice will permit the gondolas to be as gay as they used to be. It was with the old Venetians as with our dames and gallants of the sixteenth century: as their wealth waxed they grew most unconscionable in their personal adornments. It was no uncommon thing for a senator's wife to carry a hundred thousand ducats' worth of trinkets strung about her fair form. In domestic life silver and gold plate became fashionable with the rich; and here, likewise, much good, marketable coin was locked up, to the detriment of trade in the most commercial city of the world. Luxury in furniture naturally involved luxurious fittings for the family coaches—the gondolas. Thus it chanced that the cerulean waters of the canals were made bewitching by multitudes of fantastic shapes in gold and silver, the cabins and decks of which charmed the eye with their brocades, and silks, and satins, in purple and crimson, yellow, scarlet, green, and gold.

What a blend of colours one might have seen from the Rialto Bridge any day, three or four hundred years ago! The contrast between those times and ours is somewhat humbling. The bridge itself is improved into a handsome stone erection, still massed with a double row of shops and booths. But the outlook of the present time is relatively dull. Half-a-dozen black serpentine gondolas, filled with American travelling-trunks, will be seen winding their laborious way to the railway station. A steamboat or two will shoot, with distressful output of smoke, from one pier to another in their perambulation of the Grand Canal. And, perhaps, one big barge will creep heavily and slowly into full sight, laden with hay cut from the mainland meadows, and brought into Venice, not for the consumption of her horses—since she has none—but for the kine, who, in many a shed, supply the city with their milk.

The Senate of Venice placed an embargo upon what it conceived to be an injurious display of luxury. Thenceforward the gondolas put on black, and in black they have mourned ever since. But, as I have said, the present civic rulers of the place, descendants of greater forefathers, who ruled a realm instead of a city, may just as well repeal, or nullify by example, a law which nowadays holds rather by force of custom than because of its actual legality. There will be fewer "palaces" to let at absurdly trivial rentals, when Venice is made more attractive by the aid of charms which are less suggestive of the graces of mere decay.

"Will you go out on the water or in among the 'canaletti,' signor?"

"Why, out on the lagoon, to be sure!"

Upon such a day—for it is warm spring

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weather—it were a thousand pities to grope between tall houses, in a stream of almost stagnant water no wider than a Midland ditch.

And so, with a fresh catch of song, of a freer and more breezy kind, befitting the broader arena of our excursion, Jacopo turns the "ferro," as if upon a pivot, and away we glide towards the burnished distance of the waters.

Now, if need be, it were easy to pay several desirable visits in the outskirts of Venice. Yonder is the crimson islet of the Armenian Monastery. I call it "crimson," because its campanile and its walls are the colour of the summer sky at sundown. Else it is not devoid of greenery to enliven its buildings. Every one goes to the Armenians, if there be but three or four days at disposal for all Venice and her surroundings. So be it; for that reason will I not go. Lord Byron was in some respects a notable man; and he patronised these Armenians. The pen he used in the monastery is not in itself a wonder of the world; but it is a wonder of the monastery. That is what the people go thither to see, and much good may the spectacle do them. But the worthy monks, who are erudite, clever men, are not above laughing at our country people for their imbecility. They do not think so much of Lord Byron's memory as perhaps Lord Byron himself still supposes.

The red campanile of San Lazzaro may therefore be left behind, with its edging of greensward and its steel-grey background of the waters, beset with many a bronzed and orange-coloured sail.

Beyond San Lazzaro is the Lido—that laughing resort of Venice in her holiday moods. Ah! the Lido is indeed delightful, with its cosy little restaurants set by the water-side, and its tables with their pyramids of fruit inviting to breakfast under the fresh green of the trellised vines; with its varnished and gabled châlets bowered in little gardens, retreats for the gods, within view of Venice, and all her fairy towers and domes on one side, and on the other gazing at the blue of the Adriatic, and the white-capped waves which plunge with a roar upon the shelly shingle of the Lido's eastern line; with its miles-long sea walk on the embankment that leads towards Malamocco, passing by forts which are still guarded as zealously as if hundred-ton guns were but imaginative vagaries, and passing vineyard after vineyard and acres upon acres of useful kitchen stuffs; even with its cemeteries, devoted to the Hebrews, who come here from the unsavoury Ghetto of the western skirts of Venice, to lie in green hollows guarded from all winds and shone on by the unpolluted sun, the Lido is pleasant from end to end, and Venice would lose much if she lost this fair islet and breakwater, whither every hour of the day tiny steamers carry her revellers in quest of sea air, flowers, and welcome change.

No, we will not go to the Lido, or else it were impossible to leave it until the evening brume steals over the waters, insinuating the approach of night.

What is that other little islet to the north of Venice—red all over, as if but a pile of new-baked bricks, enough to build a city—and so near that it may be reached in a few urgent minutes?

"Oh, that, signor, is the cemetery. Ave Maria! May it be many years before I go there, with my heels to the front!"

"Amen, Jacopo, since you wish it. It is the Christian cemetery, I suppose?"

"Yes, signor; the Jews may go to the Lido; and a good place, too, with a thorn hedge on one side that can tear a strong coat to rags, and walls on the other. There was a Jew once in our 'calle,' signor, and he came to Venice so poor that he ate our leavings, and they were very little. But he saved his 'soldi' like no other man that ever was, I should think, and for all he lived on the bits of others, he soon had more money than all the rest of us in the 'calle' put together. Then he took to trade, and the lottery, and, signor, in ten years he was a rich man; and now he lies in the Lido with a lot of fine words over him—'reproachless citizen, devoted husband,' and that sort. Well, well, if only it had pleased the Madonna to make me a Jew! But I would have been Catholic all the same. And then perhaps I should be no better off than I am now. So what good in grumbling!"

It was not likely we should go to the cemetery, after rejecting the Lido. But we crossed the procession of some others, who were bent thither for their long sleep. One of the dead was a patrician, whose ancestors did much for Venice nearly a thousand years ago. He, however, had accepted the new order of things, and was democratic. With his sires' tombs in the churches, towering forty feet above the bystander, and amazing in their sculptured glories, he would have nothing to do, even if it had been permitted him

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to lay his bones with theirs. He proposed to lie in a niche, like a chandler or a chicken-merchant, girdled by the high, ugly red walls, which make the island look like a fortification.

These dead went to their tombs in their gondolas, with candles on each side of them. Some priests of distinction followed in other gondolas, with thurifers, acolytes, a number of palsied old pensioners of the defunct, deputations of different associations and guilds, with banners and mortuary wreaths so huge that two men carried one between them. It was a pretty scene, although the dead lay under black palls. The clerics chatted and took snuff; the pensioners mumbled and drew in the salt air through their leathery old nostrils, now begging a pinch of snuff from some opulent companion, and now nodding off into incipient naps; the acolytes grinned at each other, or played tricks with the candles, or dabbled their fingers in the amaranthine water; and the deputies of guilds argued about wages and the advisability of instituting a strike or two by way of reminding employers of their duty. Behind the procession were the tall, green-shuttered houses of the city, somewhat mildewed as to their bases, and decorated by incredible bunting of clothes from the wash. In front the red cemetery and the glistening water. And beyond, over distant islets and towers, and the more distant haze of the mainland, with its trees and houses, the Titanic shapes of the Alps, with half their snow in the clouds.

"Then is it not the same in your country when a man departs?" asked Jacopo.

"By no means. It is not as picturesque, in the first place. For my part, I think I should like to die in Venice; and you, Jacopo, shall row me to the cemetery, like those others yonder."

"Whenever you please, signor. I am sure it will not be difficult to arrange."

North of the cemetery is the island of Murano, famous for many reasons. Like every other spot of land in this favoured pool, it is pleasant to look upon. It is somewhat extensive also: a Venice in miniature, with back streets (the 'canaletti'), and mildew, and green shutters, and much linen hanging to dry from the windows of dilapidated houses. But it has no Doge's Palace, no S. Marco, no picture galleries, and, of course, few memories to vie with those of the greater city.

It is mainly a painter's city nowadays. The artist is assumed to be indifferent to evil smells, to dirt, unwashed children, and rickety habitations, so they combine, after their fashion, to make up well on canvas.

The Cathedral of Murano is, indeed, still enchanting in a plaintive way. What wondrous mosaics are those on its uneven flooring! Older, too, than the equally marvellous work of San Marco itself. But they have been ruthlessly trodden upon, as they were like to be: the patterns in part obliterated, the pieces in part displaced. Its pillars, also, are of a rude type, recalling the dependence of those early architects upon the skill of men from the seat of the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, it is probable the craftsmen were Greeks to the core. But the atmosphere of the church, as of the whole place, is subdued, damp, and depressing. One gets tired of the blotches of green mould and mildew upon the stonework. They provoke sneezing. The woman who officiates as sacristan in this forlorn temple, counteracts the damp with snuff; and, on the homœopathic principle, methinks she does wisely, if not well.

But there is an industry of Murano, which, in our eyes, and in the esteem of that other great shop-keeping nation of old, the Venetians themselves, still redeems it from the insignificance of a mere ruin, a mere place for sentimental tears. Are not its glass beads dispersed all over the world in witness of this industry? I dare say, three hundred years ago, it was such pretty trifles from this little island that, more than aught else, ensnared the hearts of many a nation of noble savages. The beads were forerunners to firewater, and firewater led to extinction. Thus, in no small way, Murano has helped forward what, for the sake of euphony, we may call "the advance of civilisation."

This is a very fair brag for a puny islet in the Adriatic. But, in those days, Murano was something more than a bead-factory, and the source of chandeliers and wine-glasses innumerable. It was, "both from its sweet air and its sweet situation, a place for nymphs and goddesses" to dwell in. Its cypress-groves and orange-gardens attracted such worthies as Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, Aretino, and the great rulers of the Republic, even as the bathing machines and cafés of the Lido, in our days, win the affections, among others, of sedate butcher boys and wearied retailers of haberdashery.

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What Attic shafts of talk enlivened the dainty suppers which were here laid under the summer skies, 'mid the perfume of the orange-blossom! Hither also, in the first days of "first editions," the great Aldo Manutius, that prince of publishers, drew his troop of scholars, so they might work in tranquillity. And, when their day's labour was o'er, the tired students would take gondola for the greater city, and meet in stately drawing-room for Greek conversation! Devoted editors, and compilers, and translators, whose every diversion was designed to be educative!

However, the hard fingers of time have rubbed off these ancient graces of Murano to a very large extent. Its meagre gardens do not now compel admiration. Even the beads, chandeliers, glass flagons, and glass dishes and cups, which are arranged with a splendour of coruscation in the public rooms, do not seem so very extraordinary. Without doubt an Inca of the fifteenth century would have lost his sense at the sight of such magnificence, and would willingly have exchanged a palace or two of solid gold for as much of their contents as he could carry in his own unaided hands. But then, the Incas did not know very much. It is some hundreds of years since they lived, and we, in our age, are born with the critical sense, and the craving for wonders of the supremely stupendous kind ere we bend the knee to them.

"Away, then, my good Jacopo; it is better to be in the open, than in the pent, foul highways of Murano. Row as near to the Alps as possible."

"But they are a long way, signor; and if we were to go until nightfall we should get no nearer to them than now."

"At least, we may get to Torcello?" an islet to which the first Venetians of Rialto were much indebted.

But, no; Jacopo has the vices coincident with his many good qualities. Exercise is all very well; but when it comes to exertion, it is displeasing to him. He is content to idle about the adjacent waters of Venice, moving his boat, as it were, by the mere breath of his lungs. He is unwilling to row six full miles across the lagoon, with the knowledge that the six full miles will be doubled ere his day's work be ended.

This is a pity; for Torcello is curious. It is especially interesting if you have been to that other ancient city to the north-east, now languishing amid a monstrous accumulation of ruined statues, and columns, and walls, fair to look upon. I mean Aquileia. Close, indeed, is the affinity between Aquileia, the desolate, and Venice, the frequented. It is worth while to recall it. Listen, then, to the words of an old Doge, a Dandolo, taken from his printed chronicle:

"The Evangelist, Mark, founded the Catholic Church in Aquileia in the year of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, 48. Having preached the Gospel in Rome, with Peter, at Peter's bidding he came to Aquileia, where a church was built, and his preachings were innumerable. In the course of his roamings through the marshes in a boat, he touched the island of Rialto; and having attached his boat to the shore, an angel of God appeared to him and said: 'Peace be with thee, Mark. In this place shall thy body come to rest.' The angel proceeded to foretell the sufferings and death which were to intervene ere he should lie in Rialto. To all which Mark replied: 'Thy will be done, Lord.'"

Many centuries passed before this angelic prophecy was fulfilled. It was the year 802 A.D., and the third of the Doges was ruling in Rialto. Envoys from Venice then chanced in Alexandria to meet two monks, who there had charge of the church in which St. Mark's relics were guarded. The monks bewailed their insecurity. The Moors (Arabs) of Cairo constantly made raids upon the place, carrying off whatever of value they could seize. It was a wonder the holy relic had been spared so long. When they heard this, the Venetians begged to have the body to take back with them to Venice. At first the monks dared not consent. "We should," they said, "be in a grievous plight if, having done this, it were to become known." The Venetians, no doubt, won them over with golden arguments. The body was found wrapped in a silken robe, sealed with many seals. From this covering it was abstracted, so that the seals appeared not to have been broken. It was then packed in a box with a quantity of pork and grass. The pork was designed to vex the Mahommedan custom-officers, who, when they saw it, meddled no farther with the box, and let it go. In this way, enveloped in a ravishingly aromatic cloud, the relic was transported to Venice, where it now lies beneath the high altar of St. Mark's.

All the old importance of Aquileia has passed, with St. Mark, to Rialto. It is now but a fever-stricken little hamlet,

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on the marshy border of the Adriatic, at its most northern part. But it has a Basilica second to none upon the Adriatic shores. Here one sees, as in Torcello, the episcopal tribune on a daïs by the altar, and the seats for the inferior clergy arranged in circular fashion about it. How solid and grotesque are the carvings of its capitals! How well worthy of prolonged study its ancient frescoes and monuments! But it is hardly less desolate than Babylon herself. To view the baptistry—a high, isolated chamber near the north-western corner—I set three chairs one upon the other, and scaled them like a ladder. But ere I had reached my vantage post, down with a ruinous crash fell all the chairs, a piteous comminglement of broken legs and parted trunks. The noise echoed and re-echoed from the solemn old vaulting overhead, and then died away into nothingness. No one heeded it. I had entered the cathedral unguided. Of all the many clergy who of old frequented its stalls, but one is left. Even the sacristan gives but his leisure hours to it. It is as forlorn, at this day, as when Attila and his Huns, ages ago, passed their desecrating hands of ravage over it.

"Back to the Piazzetta, Jacopo. It is dolorous this thinking of the past."

"Why yes, signor, of course it is. It was the year I took Elisabetta home for wife that I paid for my first lottery ticket. Every week since, and it is twenty, quite twenty years now, a franc has gone to the Government, and never a prize to show for it. Why, signor, I should—Holy Maria, there's no doubt of it—I should be a rich man if I had all the francs I have paid to the lottery. Oh! per Bacco! it is hard to think of the past—that it is!"

"You are a singular fool, my dear Jacopo, to waste your money in that way."

"Waste! Well no, it is not quite waste, after all. Now that I think of it, signor, I will tell you truly, there is something more in it than you think."

"Yes, I should like to hear all you can have to say in favour of your stupidity."

"Don't you see, signor? Life is rather mild—too quiet, tame, and that sort of thing for some of us; though they do say we Venetians have no more spirit than lambs. Ah! you should have seen us in the siege of '48! Well, we take our cup of hope every week, just as you strangers in England, I have heard, drink a little gin every day, for the spirits. It helps us on. And besides, when all's said, I may win even now, at this very hour, a sum of money enough to buy a palace in the Grand Canal, and be a rich man ever after. Oh, may God and all His saints grant it!"

Sauntering over the sunlit waters, we inch by inch return to the beautiful city of domes and towers and high old buildings, with green shutters and clothes hung out to dry. Jacopo is full to the throat of gossip and reflections, which have a trick of falling away obliquely into a ballad about a girl's black eyes, or a catch of fish. But though I have been uncivil enough to call him a fool to his face, he is not really anything like a fool. I do not think Venice can breed fools. Her beggars are the nearest to them; but they are far too shrewd, far too fond of the sun and idleness to be convicted of systematic idiotcy. Venice has a multitude of charitable institutions, in which men may live without working. I myself have half thought of striving for admission to one, for it is on the whole quite enough pleasure to exist here, without care for the luxuries that impudently press themselves upon our attention in England under the guise of necessaries. But it is well that I am disqualified for such happy inertion. In the long run it does not agree with British blood.

And so farewell, Jacopo; we have had a very pleasant saunter. I shall go off to England to-morrow. Enough of the gondola. "Take it away, I shall not use it again," as the last of the Doges said to his valet, when he removed his ducal coronet after the surrender of the Venetian State to Napoleon.

IN A PLACE OF SECURITY.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

CHAPTER I.

"THERE was a sound of revelry by night" within the usually quiet precincts of Bedford Square. Carriages and cabs drove up in quick succession and deposited their inmates upon the strip of carpet that led the way up the broad steps of No. 88. Striped awnings fluttered overhead, and the solid old house vibrated to the footsteps of dancers and rang with the

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tuneful strains of fiddles and clarionets. It was not exactly a fashionable gathering, perhaps, although rank and fashion were duly represented; but there were literary lions in plenty; learned professors brought their wives and daughters; dark-skinned Orientals were there in flowing robes and adorned with glittering jewels. There was a yellow beauty from China, and a brown Ranee from India, with a homely face in a gorgeous setting of gold and precious stones; there were fair Americans, delicate and fragile as porcelain; and a black Princess from the Congo, with a massive gold ring through her nose, attracted some attention.

But, of all the young women present, there was none to compare—at all events in the opinion of Herbert Shepstone, the eldest son of the house — with pretty Louise Cornely, with her dark, wavy hair, classic profile, and deep violet eyes, that shone upon the observer with a soft mysterious radiance when she raised her dark-fringed eyelids and turned towards him.

Louise was a friend of the house, and, if she had a chaperon at all, it was Mrs. Shepstone herself, who, in her capacity of hostess, was much too busy to look after her. Hence there was nobody to tell her that she was dancing too much with Mr. Herbert. But then he was most to blame for insisting on filling up her programme, and, after all, she liked him best, and it was a real pleasure to dance with him. As for Colonel Shepstone, who might have given his son a hint upon the matter, he was quite out of his element in a ball-room, and had retired to a quiet corner with two or three learned friends, where they were discussing some interesting point connected with Buddhist inscriptions in India. Colonel Shepstone was noted as an Orientalist, and also as a rich virtuoso and collector.

But the talk between the Colonel and his friends was not altogether of a rigidly scientific character. There was an element of personal gossip in it.

"I see you have got Cornely's daughter here," said Professor Higgins, a man with a very ugly but kindly and humorous face, "and a sweet-looking young thing she is," continued the professor. "I hope she has heard nothing——"

"About what?" asked the Colonel, sharply.

"Oh, there is nothing definite; but there are rumours that Cornely's expedition has come to grief, and there are fears as to his safety."

"Oh, Cornely is all right," said the Colonel, dogmatically. "A man like that knows how to take care of himself."

From Colonel Shepstone's manner it was evident that Mr. Cornely was no great favourite of his. Cornely, indeed, might be called a professional explorer. He hunted down buried cities and ancient burial places. He dug, he excavated, he brought home all kinds of objects, and sold them sometimes to public museums, both home and foreign, sometimes to private collectors like Colonel Shepstone. Some hard bargains he had driven with the latter had irritated the Colonel against him. And then Cornely, who was a great linguist, had severely criticised some of the Colonel's translations. Still, Shepstone was too just a man to visit the misdoings of the father upon the daughter. Louise was the bosom friend of his daughter Bessie, and he had never objected to that friendship. But when, in the course of the evening, a good-natured female friend enquired, "If it were really the case, as everybody said, that Herbert was engaged to Miss Cornely—his attentions were so marked," the Colonel, while dismissing the notion with a laugh, inwardly resolved that he would give Master Herbert a good talking to on the morrow.

But the evils of procrastination were once more exemplified. Before the evening was over Herbert had plainly told his love to Louise, and had made the delightful discovery that his affection was warmly reciprocated. All this had been settled during the progress of a dance which the lovers had sat out together in a sheltered nook of the conservatory. The girl's chief misgiving was, "What will Bessie say to me?" for certainly their friendship had not been designed for any such result. The two girls had drawn from the same cast at the museum; it was Antinous, and certainly, now that Louise came to think of it, the head was just like Bertie's. They had studied the same books, practised the same music, and had agreed that one day they would share the same studio, and devote themselves to art, and to kindred subjects in the spirit of free and unfettered womanhood. But all this time Bertie was an unknown quantity. He was with his regiment in the East, and it was only within the last four months, when the young man had been quartered at Aldershot, that Louise had come to know him; and there was something so fresh and new about him, that when he began

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to make love to her she found him quite irresistible.

And Bessie was indeed angry and indignant when in the course of the evening Bertie whispered to her the secret. "Rubbish," she said. "Father will never permit it. And Louise is a regular little serpent. Why, only a little while ago, I know she thought of nothing but her father's handsome secretary, George Melitus, and I am sure she wears his portrait next her heart. I have noticed it ever since he left, and she will not show it to me or to anybody."

Bertie told his sister she was a little traitress, which did not mend matters. But Bessie had landed the shaft of jealousy fairly and truly in his manly breast. For he had noticed this locket, or whatever it was that Louise thus cherished, nestled snugly within her corsage, just out of sight, except when partially revealed in the exertion of the dance. In the next waltz that he danced with Louise, Herbert artfully introduced the subject:

"Dearest," he whispered, as they rested for a moment after a long spin, "you must wear my portrait now instead of that locket you treasure so carefully."

Louise looked up with a shade of alarm in her violet eyes.

"It is not a locket," she said, "it is an amulet, a charm."

"May I look at it?" asked Bertie, holding out his hand.

"Indeed, no!" replied Louise. "It is my secret, and you must not ask anything about it."

Bertie's face clouded a little.

"But if I were your husband—and now I am your promised spouse—you would tell me!"

Louise looked distressed as she replied:

"I can't make such wild suppositions; but when my father comes home, which will be soon I hope, then I can tell you all about it."

"Ah! then George Melitus will be home, too," suggested Herbert, jealously.

"Has Bessie been talking to you about George?" asked Louise, with an injured air. "He is a kind of cousin, you know. Bessie does not like him; but he is a nice boy—a distant cousin of ours, and so devoted to papa. But you don't know all our family," she continued, as if anxious to change the subject. "There is Aunt Irene; she is so kind and good, but suffers so much; and there is Constantia, George's sister, you know, who helps me to take care of aunt. I am glad you did not see Constantia first; she is like me, people say, the same size and figure."

"I can imagine she is charming," said Herbert, with an adoring smile.

"Ah! but she is more so."

Just then a clock on a bracket hard by gave a warning note, and Louise glanced hastily at her watch.

"It is midnight, Bertie, and I must be gone. Will you see if anybody has come for me?"

"Don't your spells work after midnight, you little witch," said Bertie, laughing. "No, indeed, you shall not go yet."

But Colonel Shepstone himself appeared upon the scene.

"Miss Cornely, your people have come for you. I am sorry we are to lose you so soon; but I know how anxious you are."

And the Colonel, taking Louise under his wing, conducted her to the hall, where her faithful attendants, Luigi and Nurse Blake, were waiting to convey her home. Bertie could only wave a silent farewell; for the Colonel angrily ordered him off to look after his other guests, and the Colonel's word was law in his own household.

It was only a stone's throw from Bedford Square to the Russell Mansions, where the Cornelys occupied a flat on the first floor. Everything was handsomely appointed about the place. Cornely's profession might be a risky one; but apparently it was lucrative enough, for the whole household bore the appearance of comfort, if not of opulence. Turkey carpets deadened the footsteps. Indian rugs, and richly-carved objects in black wood and sandal wood, were scattered about. A musky, Oriental perfume hung about everything.

As Louise entered the portals of her own home, a young woman—it was Constantia—glided to meet her.

"All is well, dear," she said, kissing her. "Your aunt is enjoying a peaceful sleep; and now I will help you to undress, and put you to bed."

"Indeed, you will not," said Nurse Blake, who had closely followed her young mistress. "Nobody touches my young lady's things while I am here to do it."

"Really you must humour old nurse," whispered Louise, "and get some rest yourself; you want it more than I do."

Constantia sent an evil look towards Nurse Blake, and swept gracefully away.

"Oh ye serpent, ye viper," muttered nurse as she followed her young lady into

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her room. But Blake was by no means active as a tire-woman, and Louise soon sent her off to bed; and seating herself by the fire, for the evening was chilly, fell into a pleasant reverie upon the new and indefinite, but brightly-tinted future that imagination opened to her. Then suddenly she was disturbed by what felt like the touch of a cold finger on her neck. It was her amulet, which she must have pressed unconsciously. And then she remembered what her father had told her, half in jest it seemed, that this talisman would warn her of coming danger, if she paid heed to its indications. It was strange, too, how much importance her father attached to that precious amulet. She was to wear it night and day; on no account to remove it from her neck. The silken cord by which it hung covered a chain of steel, thin, but very strong. The amulet itself was of steel, damascened with gold, with an inscription in Arabic letters on the front of it. This little casket might not be opened. Her father had shown her the secret of it; but he had forbidden her to open it unless in dire distress, or in the event of certain knowledge of his death. As a check upon a natural feminine curiosity, he told her that, if once opened, no human power could close it again; and that she would incur by her thoughtlessness the anger of the guardians of the talisman, whoever they might be.

Louise did not take all this very seriously. So far the amulet had not exerted its powers in any way, unless it were in getting her into a small scrape with her lover, at the thought of which she smiled softly to herself. She was not ill pleased that he should be a little jealous.

The house was now perfectly still, and even the distant roar of London streets had ceased, while the church clocks all round—unheard and unthought of in the bustle of daily life—could now be heard, one taking the note from another as they tolled out the mystic hour of three.

How quickly the time had flown! Then, in the stillness of the night, she heard the handle of her door gently tried. The door was not locked, and it was opened softly. The hangings of the bed were between Louise and the door, and she could not see who entered. But some one had entered, had parted the bed curtains, and, finding the couch untenanted, was coming with quick, stealthy tread across the room. Louise caught a glimpse, in the pier glass, of a strained, white face, and of a hand that bore aloft some glittering instrument. And then the spell that bound her to her chair was overcome by the force of her terror. She sprang to her feet and confronted Constantia.

There was no mistaking the momentary gleam of anger and disappointment in Constantia's eyes; but it was only momentary.

"You wicked girl," she cried, gaily, "I knew you were asleep in your chair. Come, get to bed, or you will look like a ghost to-morrow, or, rather, to-day."

"But you look like one now," said Louise, shuddering. "Constantia, I thought you had come to murder me."

"What, with these nail scissors?" said Constantia, showing, for a moment, a pair of bright steel pliers. "A formidable weapon, is it not? But, dearest, what a curious thing that is about your neck. May I examine it?" stretching out her strong, white arms towards the amulet, which, just at that moment, seemed to Louise to give a throb in answer to the throbbing within her own bosom.

But just then Aunt Irene's bell rang. Nurse Blake and Luigi were stirring at once at the sound. Constantia glided off in the same direction, followed by Louise, who, throwing a wrap about her shoulders, hastened to see what was the matter.

Aunt Irene seemed to have suffered some kind of a seizure. She was slightly delirious, and did not recognise those about her, and she talked quickly and incoherently, while her mind seemed to be occupied with scenes long since past. It is terrible not to be recognised by those whom we love; to meet the vacant regards of eyes that are accustomed to rest upon us with affectionate glances.

Louise was full of grief and distress, but Constantia moved about with an easy, confident air.

"There is no danger," she said, calmly, "since I am here to look after her. I will give her some of her drops, and they will quiet her at once."

And, indeed, the medicine worked like a charm, and Aunt Irene fell into a profound and apparently dreamless slumber. And the house resumed its quietude.

"Ah, ye'll be dropping her off to sleep so as she'll never waken," muttered Nurse Blake, as she sought her couch once more.

In the morning Aunt Irene was still in a comatose kind of slumber, and continued in a drowsy, unconscious state. Her symptoms perplexed the doctor, who could

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only recommend extreme care and quiet. Until some time after her brother's departure, the elder Miss Cornely had been the ruling spirit of the household, although always something of an invalid. But latterly she had become quite incapacitated, and the direction of affairs had insensibly passed into the hands of Constantia, who had been taken into the household since the departure of its head. The elder servants naturally grumbled at and rebelled against the new mistress, but Louise, who had no genius for housekeeping, gladly abandoned its cares to the wise, farseeing Constantia, who seemed to possess that anomalous gift of an old head on young and handsome shoulders. And Louise had only laughed at old nurse's warnings, ascribing them to a pardonable jealousy.

The experience of the night had for the moment inspired a certain mistrust, but in the cheerful morning light things took a very different aspect, and the midnight, or, rather, the three-o'clock-in-the-morning possible robber or assassin was resolved into a kind and watchful companion, flourishing a pair of scissors.

After the declaration of the night before it might be expected that Herbert Shepstone would be heard of in some way or other; and, in fact very soon there came a note from him, beginning, "Dearest Louise," and telling how he had been summoned, by telegraph, to rejoin his regiment; but that he would return as soon as he could get a few hours' leave. It happened, however, that Colonel Shepstone had written to his friend, the colonel of Herbert's regiment, asking him to keep the young man at work, "like the very deuce," and to stop all leave on any pretext whatever. A request which was so entirely consonant with the grim commander's notion of what was fit and right, that there was no chance for Herbert of showing his nose beyond the precincts of the camp for some time to come.

And Herbert's absence was hardly compensated by a visit from Bessie, who was in a very bad temper indeed, and scolded poor Louise into tears. It was so mean of her to make her pretence of friendship a cover for a flirtation with Herbert, who, for that matter, had nothing but his "highly lucrative profession" to look to, and could not possibly marry for another twenty years.

"Twenty years!" echoed Louise in dismay, "why, I shall be thirty-nine by then."

"Oh, he will never marry you, you goose," retorted Bessie, and whirled away in greater dudgeon than ever.

But there was more serious cause for dismay before long. It was close upon midnight, shortly after the Shepstones' ball, when there was a summons to the outer door, and Louise heard the voice of George Melitus, her father's secretary and assistant. "Papa has come back," cried Louise joyfully, as she darted into the hall. There was George, dusty, ragged, broken, with unkempt hair and bandaged arm; in his eyes a staring, wild look, and altogether a figure suggesting ruin and disaster. At the sight of Louise he flung himself on his knees before her, covering his face with his hands. Louise turned white, her knees shook under her; Nurse Blake ran to support her.

"Dearest mistress," cried George in a broken voice, "forgive me that I live to tell the tale. I would have died to save him."

"He is dead, then? My poor father," wailed Louise.

"Dead! dead! dead!" repeated George, in a tone of agony.

"And ye killed him, ye he-reptile," muttered nurse to herself, but loud enough to be overheard by Constantia, who was weeping silently and wringing her hands, but who, nevertheless, kept a keen eye and ear for what was passing.

Luigi, too, came forward, bewailing his master's fate; and in the midst of it all, thrusting back the portière of her bedroom, stood Aunt Irene, a tall, ghastly, white figure, who watched the scene with wild, unmeaning eyes.

George's story, when it could be told in a coherent manner, was plain and short. Everything had gone well with the expedition; the excavations had been most successful, numerous and valuable objects of art and archæology had been recovered, including many in solid gold and silver. But the news of the treasure-trove had excited the cupidity of a tribe of Kurds, who had swooped down upon the camp, murdered Cornely, the leader of the expedition, pillaged and carried off every article of value, and left George among the rest for dead, over the body of his master, which he had valiantly defended. Then, after much suffering and privation, George had dragged himself home with the news.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 38.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III. BROTHER AND SISTER.

MR. KESTELL stood still a moment in the dimly-lighted hall when Elva had gone upstairs. Jones was folding up the carriage-rug, and did not notice him till he was surprised by being addressed in a very impatient manner; for certainly the master was not usually hasty of speech.

"The fire is out in the sitting-room, Jones. Why was it not kept up?"

"There is a good fire in your own study, sir. I didn't know — there were no orders."

Mr. Kestell was himself again in a moment.

"Ah, yes; of course that is all right. Don't sit up any longer, Jones. I have a little work to do, so, if you hear any noise, you need not be alarmed."

Jones said, "Thank you, sir," and walked away, not before he had noticed that his master's face looked white and drawn.

Mr. Kestell walked quickly across the hall, opened his study door, and closed it softly behind him. His moment of impatience was quickly over, and Jones decided that his master had eaten something indigestible at dinner.

"It's all show at Mr. Heagle Bennison's," muttered the butler; "here it's solid worth from the beef to the cream. Some bad cooking has made master cross-tempered; him as is usually as mild as milk."

Mr. Kestell looked round his study, as if he expected to see some one seated there. In reality he was hardly conscious of his own actions as he put his hand in his pocket, and went and stood by the fireside. The bright flames flickered and crackled cheerfully, and sent their reflected light upon the long, white hair of that venerable head.

Everything in the room spoke of comfort and unostentatious luxury — that luxury which refreshes the mind instead of oppressing it. But the glance of Josiah Kestell remained uneasy, unsatisfied, as he glanced occasionally round him. He was thinking of the future.

"Elva and Amice are well provided for, and there will be a handsome jointure for poor Celia. I have worked hard for it—no one can deny that, say what they will—but I kept my word. Celia has never wanted anything, neither have the girls. They must marry young. I hate society; but, for their sake, I must exert myself to have more company here. Not tuft-hunters, but honest men, who will look after them. Elva is impulsive, but she is easily led by affection. She and I understand each other; she will do as I like." A smile of intense affection seemed to pass over his face and disappear again, like a wintry gleam before rain. "But Amice," he continued, "I cannot understand her. She is full of Quixotic ideas. The sooner she learns to give up her own will to a husband the better."

The name of Amice, however, brought no proud smile to his lips. Little as it had appeared, Mr. Kestell had noted the look of fear on his daughter's face as she had come downstairs.

"Afraid of me," he continued, mentally; "Amice afraid of me! And yet I have never been harsh to her; not even when she sits still, and looks me through with

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those blue eyes of hers. She does it to everybody now—a terribly bad habit to get into. But Elva sees no faults in her sister; she would be shocked if I mentioned it. How foolish I am this evening! What was it? . . . Yes; it was that Hoel Fenner. Well, well; a mere accident. It is quite impossible, quite."

And Mr. Kestell of Greystone, who was so much respected and trusted by all the county, went on pacing his study as if he were on the brink of bankruptcy, instead of being one of the most wealthy men in the county; but riches alone cannot always make quiet hearts.

This long meditation was evidently a very unusual proceeding, for, when the clock struck one, Mr. Kestell paused and felt annoyed with himself at having sat up so late. Lighting a candle, set in a massive silver candlestick, he softly opened the door for fear of waking any of the household. He stepped very quietly up the oak staircase. The tall clock on the stairs was behind time, and, just as the master was passing, its internal machinery began making a weird noise preparatory to striking. Mr. Kestell glanced up and noted the staring face of the representative sun, peeping up above the two round hemispheres at the top of the dial. This face had a wicked look in its eyes, and it seemed to ask Kestell of Greystone what he meant by walking about at this late hour. Mr. Kestell, turning away impatiently from the deriding eyes, seemed inclined to quarrel with the foolish solar representation which some quaint fancy of the fifteenth century had taken a pride in depicting.

"I must get those works mended," thought Mr. Kestell, passing on quickly. "That idiotic sun has got stuck, and it is always in the same place, now I come to think of it. It is years since I saw the moon."

Very softly he trod; for, of course, every one was asleep at Rushbrook House. His wife could not bear to be disturbed, so he was going to his own room. To accomplish this, he had to pass the doors of his daughters' rooms. The first was Elva's. Here all was still, dark; but what was Mr. Kestell's astonishment when he perceived a thin streak of light issuing from below the door! Amice was then still up; or had she by chance left the candle alight? Mr. Kestell had a nervous dread of fire, so he paused and listened. At first he heard no sound, then suddenly a soft rustle, as of a woman's sweeping skirt. Next, a gentle footstep, as if Amice were approaching the door. Was she going to open it, and stand before him with her great blue eyes? It may sound strange and unnatural; but the mind of man is so curiously complex, that what appears to ordinary understanding odd, would, if we knew the many paths which the brain traverses before it reaches action, look perfectly natural. At this moment an uncontrollable terror of his own child seized hold of Mr. Kestell; and, not pausing to see if his imaginary picture were going to be realised, he hurried away, and, without looking back, he entered his own room, and locked the door with a noisy bang.

The next day the Kestell household awoke to its ordinary routine. Breakfast was at nine, and at a quarter to ten the carriage usually drove round to take the master to the station. Punctuality was a mania with Mr. Kestell; and by dint of gentle reproof he had succeeded in making his daughters and his servants punctual. His wife was past all reform. It had remained impressed on her mind that it was the mark of good breeding to care nothing about time; and now she still clung to this tradition, and came down at uncertain hours. Symee spent the whole morning in taking and receiving messages to various persons in the house from Mrs. Kestell; happily the girl had naturally a sweet temper, or she would long ago have preferred to beg her bread than perform her tiresome duties. Gratitude also helped her; for Mr. Kestell had saved her and her brother Jesse from the workhouse. She had been told that her grandmother had died when she and her twin brother were but babies in arms. Mr. Kestell had generously stepped forward, paid all the debts, and undertaken to support the orphans. Could such kindness ever be forgotten? thought Symee, over and over again, as she bore all Mrs. Kestell's fidgets. Mr. Kestell had done even more for Jesse than for her. He had got him into a free grammar school where the teaching was excellent; and the boy having proved worthy of help, Mr. Kestell had procured him a clerk's stool in a merchant's office. His salary was small, but his hopes were great. What cheerful letters he wrote to his sister! and what golden visions he placed before her on paper! till Symee felt that all her troubles were worth bearing for the sake of her future life with

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Jesse. This very morning Symee had had one of these epistles containing these words:

"When I am rich enough, Symee, dear, you will come and live with me, and we shall get on first rate. But we must never forget that we owe our happiness to one man, the best, the kindest man on earth. For Mr. Kestell's sake, dear, put up with the worries you tell me of. Miss Amice, Heaven bless her for it, is always good to you, you say; but you shall not always be a servant. I am very ambitious, but it is for your sake, and also——something within me seems to urge me on to do my best, and I do not think this is wrong. When I see the people round me wasting some of their best powers—for some of these poor men are very clever, but cannot keep from drink—then I feel that God will require our talents of us, and that He will show us a picture of what we might have been, and ask us to answer for what we are. Yes, you and I are the children of honest, if poor people, Symee; but we have had many blessings to answer for, and yet we, too, may hear some day the 'Well done.' A little while ago I made the acquaintance of a literary gentleman, who promises me some delightful work. Will he remember? I liked his face, and I saw at once the wide difference between him and a man like me. He seemed to know everything without being aware that he knew it. He looked to me like a bit of highly-polished steel, and I felt like just a bar of pig-iron. But, anyhow, there's work in this big world for both of us. I don't mean to get discouraged when I study my neighbours. Sometimes I feel like the man whose head is weak, and who is standing on the top of a high tower; the feeling comes over him to throw himself down. Well, here it's the same in another sort of way. Why should one keep walking upwards? Why not finish the struggle, and cast oneself down? God forgive me the thought, but it comes. Why am I telling you all this, Symee? I have no one else to write out my thoughts to; and it does me good at times; though even to you I couldn't write all that a man here has to go through. But there's the blessed work. It was not a curse God gave, but a blessing, when He said that we were to work. Oh! if we could get this idea well into our minds. Good-bye; if I hear any more of Mr. Hoel Fenner — that's the gentleman's name—I'll tell you. He says I might in time do good work with my shorthand and my writing."

Symee had read this epistle, whilst snatching a few mouthfuls of late breakfast. And just at that moment Jones looked solemnly into the housekeeper's room.

"Miss Vicary, please, the master wants you in his private study at once."

Symee folded up her precious letter, and hurried to Mr. Kestell's room, blushing from shyness. When she heard the words, "Come in," and saw her benefactor's benign face, she was soon reassured.

"I won't detain you long, Symee," he began, kindly. "I wanted to know if you had heard from your brother lately; and how is he getting on? I thought——"

He paused, and Symee filled up the pause.

"Oh, sir, he's doing very well. It's hard work, of course, and he has to be careful; but in time he'll get on, I know he will. And Jesse would rather starve than get into debt, and bring discredit on you, sir, who have been so kind——"

"That's nothing—nothing at all, Symee. I was glad to help him. Of course, there were expenses when you were both young, but I never grudged them. I spent the original sum that—that I had put away for that purpose. You have nothing to complain of, have you, Symee? Nothing you wish altered?"

Symee's whole soul seemed filled and overflowing with gratitude; not for all the world would she have mentioned any of her troubles, had these been greater even than they were.

"Oh, no, no, sir. You have been so good to me and Jesse."

"Tut, tut; you are a good girl, Symee. You have much influence with your twin brother. It is very natural: a woman is older for her years than a man at your age. Use your influence well, Symee. For instance, if Jesse should wish to—try some other walk in life, remind him that a rolling stone gathers no moss; but, as all young men have aspirations, tell him, from me, Symee, that I shall always be glad to hear his plans. I don't wish to dictate to him, but I think I may justly expect to be kept informed of his doings. Strangers may take him in; they may lead him on for their own purposes, and then deceive him."

Symee was at once filled with anxiety.

"Do you think so, sir? Only this morning, Jesse was telling me of a gentleman who was going to help him. A Mr. Hoel Fenner. Shall I tell him to have nothing to do with him?"

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Symee at first doubted if she ought to betray her brother's confidence; but was not Mr. Kestell, as he said, entitled to know everything about them both?

Mr. Kestell put out his hand and carefully tidied some letters on his table.

"I don't say that, mind, Symee. I say nothing. I only wish to give you a general warning."

"Oh, sir, Jesse is ambitious. That is what I am afraid of; and it is for my sake, I know."

"You are a very sensible girl, Symee. Keep your brother out of mischief. Let him stick to Card and Lilley's office, and, though he may not get very rich, still he will rise slowly and surely. Your brother's address is the same, I suppose: 21, Golden Sparrow Street? Well, that will do, Symee. You are quite satisfied, and wish for nothing?"

Again a blush, expressing her love and gratitude, and, with a modest curtsey, Symee retired as she said:

"Oh no, sir. I wish for nothing. I am quite happy."

Symee spent the little leisure she had that day in writing back to her brother, and, after two pages of affection and hopes, she added:

"Dear Jesse,—Do not be ambitious for my sake. If you were to get too clever you might no longer care about your stupid sister. When we live together I will do all I can to make you happy; but I don't want you to get above your station. God made us poor, and if it had not been for Mr. Kestell, we should be workhouse children. He said to-day, 'Tell Jesse "a rolling stone gathers no moss," and don't trust strange gentlemen, who may deceive you.' Mr. Kestell asked me how you were getting on, and he seems anxious you should keep steady in Card and Lilley's office. Think of Mr. Kestell, who has never got tired of befriending us. I do often when I get worried with Mrs. Kestell's fidgets. Miss Amice was so kind to me last night, and cured my headache. It seemed like an angel touching me. Miss Elva is good too; but one is never sure of her. She has high thoughts, but Miss Amice lives up to them. She said you were to mind and come and see me when you can get a holiday. She will make it easy for us to be together; so, do come. I shall count the days till then. Your loving sister, "SYMEE"

Jesse Vicary received this letter when he was just preparing to sit down to his study of German translation. Clerks who knew foreign languages had a better chance of getting on; and with a sort of dogged perseverance Jesse had courageously begun, and meant to master the difficulties. He had a room in a small lodging-house, and a tiny dressing-room adjoining, where he slept. This constituted the only home Jesse Vicary knew; for all his life he had been at the mercy of the fitful kindness of strangers. He was not unhappy here; on the contrary, he seemed to breathe freely in this dingy place when he came home in the evening.

Not very tall, but well-made, was Jesse, with curling chestnut hair of a very unusual shade, deep-set hazel eyes, and a refinement of action which was all the more noticeable because his figure might have been improved with drilling and better-cut clothes. If one stopped to define what it was that made one single out Jesse Vicary from a host of young clerks, one would have said that it was the easy simplicity of his manner and speech. In spite of his hidden ambition, he was not in the least pretentious in manner, for he was himself. He did not pretend to be anything more than a clerk in a merchant's office, receiving a small salary, neither did he wish to impose any other personality on those who spoke to him. Yet there was a curious unconscious power about him, which, in spite of outward circumstances, impressed itself on strangers who met him; and Hoel Fenner had noticed this, and had been struck without explaining the cause to himself. There are some men and women, though fewer of the latter, who, once seen, can never be forgotten. They may have no great talents, may have made no great name in the world, and yet for all that, they are true units in a world where the tendency is to gregariousness; and their undefinable power seems to assert itself in spite of all surroundings, in spite of brilliant competitors, and in spite of the crushing, dull uniformity of their lives.

'Liza, the maid-of-all-work at No. 21, Golden Sparrow Street, shuffled up with a grin on her face to give Mr. Vicary his letter. Even 'Liza would rather work for him than for any of the other lodgers; but she had also the tie of coming from the same neighbourhood.

"Thank you, 'Liza," he said, politely, and the girl happily shuffled back to the lower regions, like some goblin of fairy lore.

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Even to touch Symee's letter did him good, and sent a new thrill of courage through his frame. Some day she would be sitting by his fireside, and he would have a sister near him on whom to expend some of the great love which must live in great hearts.

To-day, however, he heaved a little sigh of disappointment, when he had finished the letter. Symee could not understand his aspirations. The spirit of servitude was crushing out her free will. She mistook honest pride for presumption; she feared to hope.

Then he read the letter again, and a feeling of annoyance arose at Mr. Kestell's advice; but Jesse crushed the feeling as soon as it appeared. Mr. Kestell was quite right from his point of view. How could he understand what his feelings were? And, after all, though he would always be grateful for the past, at present Mr. Kestell was doing nothing for him or Symee. Both worked hard enough, Heaven knew, and the future depended on themselves.

"I will shape out our lives as far as I may," he thought, "and you must let me have my own way, dear, good little Symee. You don't know your own worth; you want me to teach it to you. But some day we will look the world bravely in the face and defy it to do its worst."

It was a bold challenge to throw down, and, happily, as Jesse opened his book and set to work, he did not realise what he was willing to face. Something of the Luther spirit was in him, as well as much of that womanly tenderness which often characterises earth's noblest men.

A FOURTEENTH CENTURY STRIKE.

RATHER more than five hundred years ago, a hundred thousand men — a very large proportion of the labouring adults in a country that then had not at most more than two and a half million inhabitants— were out on strike.

Whether or not things had been getting worse for the masses since the Norman conquest, is a moot point. Anyhow, these masses had more intelligence; and things are harder to bear when you have been wakened up to think about them. Besides, just then the French wars had increased expense, and made the burdens heavier. I dare say the English serfs were proud, in a way, of Cressy and Poitiers, though the gains in the way of ransoms—which were very large—went to the nobles. The Jews, too, were doubtless proud of Solomon's Temple, though most of the profits from it belonged to the men of Jerusalem. And yet nearly all the nation broke away from Rehoboam. It is always so; the trouble comes on in the son's time; the strong-minded and strong-handed father manages to stave it off.

The French "Jacquerie" had broken out some years earlier, because in France there was not a strong man like Edward the Third. The corresponding "strike" in England did not take place till the fifth year of Richard the Second. And the chief reason for it was that, while a third —in some parts they say half—the labouring population had been killed off by the Black Death, the landowners stood out against the natural rise in wages that followed this lessening of the labour-supply. The "Statute of Labourers" fixed the wages'-rate, and re-enacted serfdom, which had been gradually giving place to free labour, by forbidding any one to leave his parish in search of better pay. If he disobeyed, he became a "fugitive," and might be at once thrown into prison by any justice of the peace. To enforce this law meant revolution; for prices had risen greatly. For some years there had been no one to gather in the harvests; fields were left untilled; beasts roamed among the crops; the price of corn rose so high, that a man could not, with the old wages, buy enough to live on. The landowners, however, were stubborn. The "Statute," first passed in 1350, was re-enacted over and over again, with yet more stringent clauses. The runaway labourer was not only to be imprisoned, but to be branded on the forehead; and a pack of "discoverers" was loosed upon the towns to scent out serfs who had been living there unchallenged a year and a day, or had otherwise got their freedom, and to bring them back on the ground of informality. The result was that a fierce and well-organised resistance was soon begun in eight counties, from Sussex up to Lincoln; and, just as our dockers now are helped by other crafts, the "fugitive serfs" got large moneys from the tenants, and from the craftsmen of the towns.

The Church, though largely recruited from the lower orders, stood aloof. Only two or three priests, chief among them "Mad John Ball of Kent," as Froissart calls him, sided with those on strike;

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and Ball was a Lollard, and something more. "Things will never go well in England," said he, "so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they greater folks than we? They be clothed in samite, and warm in their furs, while we are in rags. They have wine, and spices, and manchet-bread, while we wash down oat-cake and chopped straw with water. They have leisure, and fine houses; we pain and labour in rain and wind. And yet it is of us and our toil that these men hold their state."

Froissart quotes the following comment on one of Ball's sermons: "We are taxed to aid the Knights and Squires to defend their lands; we are but their slaves, the sheep whom they shear close to the skin; all things considered, if England were conquered, they would lose, not we." How fast information spread is wonderful, seeing there were no newspapers, no penny post, no telegraph. When we see how stolidly ignorant country people often are nowadays of what is going on a hundred miles off, we cannot help fancying they are backwarder in regard to news than their ancestors; just as the railway has made some places more dead-alive than they were by putting coaches and post-chaises off the road. Here are samples of the written tracts that passed from hand to hand, and threw all East Anglia into a ferment:

"John Sheep, sometime Seynte Mary priest of York and now of Colchester, greeteth John Nameless and John Miller and John the Carter, and biddeth them beware of evil and stand together in God's name; and biddeth Piers Plowman to his work and to chastise well Hob the robber; and take with you John Trewman and his fellows. John the Miller he hath ground small, small, small. The King's Son of Heaven shall pay for all. Beware, or ye be wo. Knowe your friend fro your foe. Have enough and say noe, and do well and better; and flee sinne and seeke peace, and hold you therein and so biddeth John Trewman and all his fellows."

"Jack Trewman doth you to understand that falsenesse and gile havith reigned so long, and trewth hath been sette under a lokke, and falseneth and gile regneth in every flokke. Therefore sinne fareth as wild flode; trew love is a waye that was so gode; and clerks for wealth work hem wo. Now is tyme."

"Jakk the Mylner askith help to turn hys mylne aright. He hath grounden small, small. The King's Son of Heaven he shall paye for all. Looke thy mylne doe aright with the 4 sails, and the post stand in stedfastness. With ryght and with myght, with skille and with wille, let myght help ryght, and skylle goe before wylle, and ryght before myght, then goeth our milne aright. And yf myghte goe before ryght and wylle before skylle then is our mylne mysadight."

Such rough rhymes were suited to their hearers. The world, these men knew, was not their friend, nor the world's law; the faith with which they look up to heaven is very touching. Socialism had not yet become agnostic or nihilistic. Their preacher was unwearied in his appeals for Divine help. Here is one of his rhyming tracts:

"John Ball gretyth you well al, and doth you to understand he hath rungen the bell. Now ryght and myght, wyll and skyll. God spede every yeedele. Now is tyme. Lady help to Jesu thid Sonne, and thid Sonne to hys Fadur to make a gude ende in the name of the Trinitie of that is begun. Amen, amen, our charitie. Amen!"

Another runs thus:

"John Ball Seynte Mary priest byddes all manner men in the name of the Trinitie Fadur Sone and Holy Ghost, stond manlicke togeder in trewthe, and trewthes help shall help yowe. Now reigneth pride in prise, and covetous is hold wise, and letchery withouten shame, and gluttony withouten blame. Envie regneth with tressone, and slouthe is toke in grete sesone. God do bote, for now is tyme. Amen is Essex South folc and North folc."

The rising began in Essex; the signal being the laying on of the poll-tax by the Parliament of Northampton. For, farmed by foreign bankers—Flemings and Lombards, the comparatively righteous Jews having been expelled—it was rigorously, nay, brutally exacted; and the poor Englishman was much in the position of the Egyptian fellah: ground down to make up the interest of the alien bondholder.

This accounts for the fury with which, when they had possession of London, the "strikers" fell upon all aliens.

The Dartford story may or may not be true; anyhow, it is a mistake to identify the brave Dartford man, who had the good sense to keep nameless in the background,

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with "Walter Teghelere (Wat Tyler), of Essex."

The Billericay and Hadleigh men were the first to rise—the rebuilding of Hadleigh Castle had been marked with much oppression. They crossed the Thames, and, joined by the men of Kent, threw open the prisons at Maidstone and Canterbury, burning court-rolls—those records of serfdom—wherever they found them, and killing all lawyers, because the lawyer-steward had, in so many cases, contrived their re-enslavement.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, fled into Scotland. He was specially obnoxious as the patron of foreigners.

Every schoolboy knows the story, how, at Mile End, the boy-King promised the people—after they had sacked the Tower, after, too, they had slain Archbishop Sudbury and others who had hindered the King from a conference — that they should henceforth be free, and not named nor held for serfs; that they should pay a rent, fourpence per acre, instead of feudal services; that all markets should be free, without toll; and that a general pardon should be given to all who had risen.

Thirty clerks were busy all that day and night making copies of this new Great Charter. The Essex men marched off with their copies. The Hertfordshire men, under William Grindecobbe, went straight with theirs to Saint Albans Abbey, and, joined by the townsmen, broke in, flourished the King's seal before the astonished monks, and forced the Abbot to give up the bonds by which he held the town in serfage, and broke in pieces the mill-stones which, taken from the town by the Abbey, stood in the cloister, a sign that no man might grind his corn, save at the Abbot's mill.

"They broke them as small as the blessed bread in church, and each carried off a bit to show that their freedom was won."

Next day followed the scene with Walter Teghelere and the Kentish men. The King, after their spokesman had been so unfairly killed, bade them follow him to Islington; and there was Sir Robert Knollys with a thousand horse, whom Richard had much ado to keep from falling on the peasants. "The caitiffs fell on their knees and sued for mercy," and the King, to the disgust of his knights, bade them go home in peace.

There had been other local risings. The Bury St. Edmunds men had done the same as the men of St. Albans: exacted from the great Abbey a charter of freedom.

Littester, a Norwich dyer, had gathered a large company, "causing every man to rise with him." Lord Scales, Sir John Morley, Sir Stephen Hales they seized and forced to go with them. Hales Littester made his carver and taster, the others served him on bended knee.

"They thought"—says Froissart—"to make Sir Robert Salle, the Governor of Norwich, their commander, who was the handsomest and strongest man in England, and was by King Edward made a Knight, being the son of a poor mason. So they ordered him to come to them, or they would burn the city; whom, when he came, they sought to bring over with soft words: 'Robert, you are a Knight, and a man of great weight; yet you are not a gentleman, but just such as ourselves. Do you come with us, and we will make you so great a lord that one quarter of England shall be under your command.'

"But the Knight, eyeing them with inflamed looks, cried:

"'Begone, wicked scoundrels and false traitors! Would you have me dishonour myself? I would much rather have you all hanged, for that must be your end.' And so, drawing a handsome Bordeaux sword, he began clearing the crowd 'that it was a pleasure to see.' At last he was overpowered; however, he killed twelve of his opponents, before his own body was cut up piecemeal."

Soon after, Littester sent three of his chiefs, with Morley and Scales, to London to beg a pardon, taking a sum of money wherewith to buy access to the King. On their road they were met by Henry le Spencer, the fighting Bishop of Norwich. He, suspecting how things were, forced Hales to tell him all; cut off the heads of Littester's envoys; and hastened back, joined at every turn by the gentry and their retainers, who took heart when they saw how brave the Bishop was. Close to North Walsham they found the peasants entrenched behind waggons, windows, doors — a regular barricade. Spencer, however, rode at it, "grinding his teeth like a wild boar;" and, after a hard hand-to-hand fight, the peasants gave way, and, hindered from flying by their own barricade, were killed like sheep. Littester the Bishop took to Norwich, and had him drawn and quartered, "having confessed and absolved him according to his office, and himself accompanying him to execu-

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tion—yea, even supporting his head as he was dragged to the gibbet, thus showing," says Froissart, "his great humanity and kindness." Being a brave man, he was, probably, less cruel to Littester's followers than were the cowards who had shut themselves up in their castles, and then, when the "strikers" had quietly gone home, came to the King, and forced him first to rescind the "new charter," and then to march through Kent and Essex at the head of forty thousand men, killing and hanging. How many were put to death by process of law will never be known—some fifteen hundred, says Stow; but he lived nearly two centuries after. Billericay stood a regular siege, and its stubborn defenders suffered proportionately. The Essex juries had to be threatened with hanging before they would convict the poor creatures, who, they well knew, were no guiltier than themselves. It is some comfort that Sir Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice, was, six years after, hanged at Tyburn by the Parliament, variously styled "wonderful," or "merciless," of which the Duke of Gloucester was the moving spirit. He deserved no mercy, for he had shown none to the wretched peasants to whom Richard's Royal word had promised an entire amnesty.

A more thorough falsifying of a King's word is not to be found in history. On the fifteenth of June, in the fourth year of Richard the Second, the new "Charter" ran: "Know ye that of our special grace we have manumissed all and singular our liege subjects of the County of Essex, and them and every of them from all bondage do release by these presents; and also we pardon to them all manner of felonies, etc." A year after, at Chelmsford, the King withdrew "all the letters patent given at the importunate instance of the rebels in the late detestable disturbance horribly made against our peace. . . . We did indeed acquit them from all bondage and service, and pardoned them all manner of insurrections and treasons by them or any of them made. Yet, for that such our letters did issue without mature deliberation and unduly, we retract the whole, ordering bondmen to return to their serfage, and cancelling the free pardon to all and singular." Inquisitions were accordingly held in every Kent and Essex town, and in many places elsewhere in East Anglia, and the hangman had a lively time. Richard, boy though he was, was ashamed of himself. He had even been made to scold the "strikers"; for, when the Billericay men pleaded his own charter, he replied:

"Oh miserable and hateful both to land and sea, not worthy to live, do ye require to be equal to your lords? . . . As ye were husbandmen and bondmen so ye shall remain, and yet more vile, so that posterity may have before their eyes your misery as in a glass, and may fear to commit the like."

Yet we find that he earnestly besought the next Parliament to do away with villeinage.

"No," said the landowners, "our serfs are our goods, and the King cannot take them from us without our consent. Villeins they were and are, and in bondage they shall remain."

So the great strike of 1381 ended in blood and tears. But was it wholly useless? Before this question can be answered, the economic history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries must be more closely studied. People are studying these things instead of the old story of battles and of Royal marriages, and the alliances of mighty princes—but enough has not yet been learnt to enable us to say if the food, etc., of the labourer was much better just before the Wars of the Roses than in Richard the Second's time; and if the manumissions, which soon became general, were or were not due to this great "strike." The Wars of the Roses killed off so many of their oppressors, that thenceforth the people had it much more their own way. Anyhow, the immediate result of the "strike" was to make bad worse; and one groans to think how then, as now, timely concession might have saved so much misery.

PREJUDICE.

It would be hard to say whether prejudice bears witness to the natural greatness or littleness of mankind. It may seem paradoxical at first sight, but prejudice in one aspect seems to support the view that "we are greater than we know," while looked at in another light, it would warrant a very different conclusion. In so far as prejudice blinds us, as it often does, to the truth, and prevents our listening with even decent attention to the views and arguments of others, it certainly testifies, in an unpleasant manner, to our mental weakness; but, on the other hand, if we

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enquire how prejudices arise, we may perhaps flatter ourselves that they are merely faults incidental to noble natures. For prejudices are due to the repugnance which most of us feel to the painful task of verifying our opinions, and to the tendency we have to leap to conclusions. Yet these may, after all, demonstrate that man was originally made not to crawl, but to soar; and that his naturally lofty spirit is caused to err by external and adverse circumstances. The cynic, probably, may adopt one view, the optimist another; but it may be that there is some truth in both.

Certainly, prejudice is partly due to the perversion of a noble instinct, the desire to hold fast that which is true. Once the mind is firmly persuaded, rightly or wrongly, of the truth of any particular opinion, it takes much to root that opinion out, however fallacious it be, especially if the belief be consecrated by the lapse of ages. Now it may safely be said that at the root of every prejudiced belief there does lie some evidence which, to uncritical minds, apparently justifies it completely. Prejudice is simply, in the first place, "prejudging," that is, coming to a conclusion upon very insufficient evidence, combined with preconceived ideas, and this marks it off from rational belief.

Let us take some trivial examples for illustration.

There existed not so very long ago—if, indeed, they are quite extinct even now—such prejudices as a dread of beginning any work upon a Friday, or of sitting down to table in a party of thirteen, and many others of a similar nature. Now when such prejudices began, the preconceived idea at work was the belief that supernatural influence obtruded itself constantly in daily life. There was no belief in natural fixed laws, and, consequently, there was room for the wildest interpretations of natural phenomena. Friday was a marked day in the calendar, for what reason every one knows, and a party of thirteen brought vividly to mind a solemn celebration in Christian history, with the tragic end of one of those who assisted at it — the traitor Judas. Attention was thus directed specially to such days as Friday and to parties of thirteen, and when accidents occurred in connection with work begun on a Friday, as they were as liable to do as if it had been any other day, or when one of a party of thirteen died before the year was out, a not improbable occurrence, the conclusion was at once reached—that there was some connection between the day, or the number, and the misfortune. No one, at first, seriously thought of comparing other days with Friday, in this respect, or other numbers with thirteen, and when the belief was fairly established, one coincidence would outweigh a hundred failures. Such prejudices were, undoubtedly, survivals of Pagan ways of thinking; but it is unnecessary to go into the subject of Pagan prejudices, except to say that they themselves arose in a similar manner.

Prejudice may also be described as the defence of preconceived ideas by inadequate or irrelevant evidence.

Now, human nature seems to be an "Universal"—to borrow a term from the Schoolmen—and we seem to be born into the world each with a greater or less share of one vast whole; a whole which has been modified by the mistakes and errors of generations, as well as sanctified by a thousand noble deeds and thoughts. We take up the web of human life where our fathers left it, and, in our turn, hand it on with our own mistakes and shortcomings almost indissolubly woven in, along with such improvements we have, as a generation, been able to introduce. A truly great man is he who himself manages to give a new aspect almost to the whole, who himself tears out most errors, and who gives the tangled fabric a new consistency, summing up in himself a generation.

Such a man was Aristotle in ancient days, such men were Bacon and Kant in more modern times. If it were not for these great "epoch makers," human improvement would be very much slower than it is, since men are so apt to go on repeating the lessons they have learned by rote until these have become so interwoven with men's minds, that little short of superhuman power is required to change inherited views. Thus the great majority of us require irresistible evidence before we can overthrow deeply-rooted prejudices; while for the confirmation of these prejudices almost any evidence will suffice.

If the great Ptolemy, at a critical point of his reasoning, had tried a few simple experiments, the importance of which he was fully competent to appreciate, to him would have belonged the immortal glory of having demonstrated the true motion of the earth. But the prejudice of ages was against him, and trivial arguments

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were enough to upset the true theory, which had really been suggested to him.

The reasoning of a Scottish cobbler, nearly a century ago, is a fair specimen, not only of prejudiced reasoning in general, but actually of Ptolemy's own reasoning in particular. The minister of a certain parish had arranged to give a course of lectures in the parish schoolroom on popular science. In the first lecture the reverend doctor explained and illustrated the motions of the earth. This teaching was new to village people a hundred years ago, and naturally provoked much discussion, when an old cobbler denounced the Copernican theory, as not only contrary to Scripture and contrary to science, but even to common sense. For he had long been in the habit of hanging his dried fish on a hook outside his door, and had always found them in the same place in the morning: "And hoo could that be," he triumphantly added, "if the earth were fleein' round like a ba' (ball)?"

This reminds one of Dr. Johnson's attempted refutation of Berkeley's celebrated theory of the non-existence of matter. The Doctor maintained that Berkeley could refute himself if he ran his head against a post. Popular prejudice prevented Johnson from perceiving that Berkeley denied the existence of matter, not in the ordinary, but in the philosophical sense, two very different propositions.

We all know how the proposed introduction of railways raised a storm of prejudiced opinion, and we are now amused to find that the "Quarterly Review" considered that it would be as reasonable for people to expect to travel on a rocket, fired out of a cannon, as to travel at a speed twice as great as that of a stage-coach. This was "prejudging" the case with a vengeance.

We may ask whether it be possible to eradicate prejudice, and the tendency to prejudice, out of the human mind. The methods of modern science, rigid as they are in excluding preconceived ideas from amongst them, have done much in this direction; and, if they have failed in any degree, we must remember that the battle against prejudice is not yet three centuries old — a small period in the world's history.

Few could be found to battle against popular beliefs when the stake was only too probably the end of the struggle. Humanity can only proceed slowly, and it is probable that, in the present state of human progress, to be wholly without prejudice is very likely to be wholly without principles. In the present state of our knowledge an intense love of truth must lead in a certain degree to prejudice, although it is our duty to base our beliefs, so far as possible, on reason and evidence.

The most curious case of prejudice in a truly great man, is that of Goethe's determined opposition to Newton's theory of light. The great poet simply refused to believe that it was possible that white, pure light could be made up of coloured rays. Experiment was wasted upon him; his poetical view of Nature prejudiced him to such an extent that he declared that experiments merely tortured the rays of light into different colours, but could never truly analyse them.

Take as a modern case of violent prejudice that existing in some quarters against cremation. There are undoubtedly reasonable grounds against this method of disposal of the dead, chiefly connected with jurisprudence; but these are questions for experts to solve, not for us. But in most cases the objections seem to come from an unfounded dislike to the new methods, a dislike based simply on the ground that cremation is an idea strange and unaccustomed to us. We often hear people say, "Oh! I have such a horror of cremation, nothing could induce me to consent to being burnt after death." If such people had occasion to stand at any time beside a grave, reopened a short time after it has been used for burial, and, by contrast, to witness afterwards the result of cremation, the experience would probably do more to dissipate an unfounded prejudice than any argument could do. But when this dislike is coupled with religious prejudice, then it becomes formidable indeed. People who suffer from religious prejudices have a strong pull over their opponents. The former class do not scruple to use names and arguments which more worldly people often shrink from lightly using, lest they be guilty of irreverence, and the appeal to religious sentiment usually has a favourable result for the former. Yet it is possible to overstrain this sentiment, and the consequences of such an overstress may be curious. So illogical are our human tendencies in general, that when a prejudice is overstrained, when reaction comes, whatever of truth may have been mingled with it is apt to be thrown away along with the rubbish. This ought to be kept in mind by those who excite happily dormant

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religious prejudices. We might venture to say that the references which have been made with regard to the dogma of the resurrection in connection with cremation, as, for example, that it tends to weaken faith in that dogma, or to interfere somehow with its being carried out, would occur to no intelligent outsider as having any bearing on the subject at all. No unprejudiced man could possibly imagine that a fore-ordained miracle could be modified or frustrated by any human interference whatever. We may perhaps be permitted to add with all reverence, with regard to the theory that it is incumbent on all Christians to bury their dead after the example of a certain Burial, that this argument seems singularly irrelevant, even for a theological one. In the first place, that burial was not in the earth, but in a rock-hewn vault; and in the second place, the loathsome accompaniments of burial — the very reasons for cremation—were in this case, we are told, wanting.

It is curious to note how one violent prejudice is almost certain to beget its opposite in course of time. The violent prejudice of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists against religion begot the equally prejudiced ravings of De Maistre and the theocratic school.

It is the mark of prejudice to be blind to the beauty of an object, while startlingly alive to its faults; in this Voltaire and De Maistre are counterparts of one another. The former could see no beauty in religion, the latter could not appreciate the value of science or philosophy outside the Catholic Church.

Probably it is true that the more unreasonable a prejudice is, the stronger it becomes. We have high scientific authority for believing that rats and snails are excellent food for human beings. Yet most of us, however enlightened, would pause before committing ourselves to such a diet. Yet a properly-fed rat is a cleaner animal than a pig; and most anglers know that a trout is by no means scrupulous in choosing its feeding-place.

Prejudices which are founded on a true, earnest desire for human welfare, demand respectful consideration, and must be met by honest and straightforward methods. Can any one, acquainted with the literature of the last century, wonder at the prejudice which existed at one time against novel-reading? Works of genius of a bygone age are terribly doubtful reading for boys and girls in the eyes of many parents anxious on account of their children; and, until the masters of modern fiction arose, we can easily understand why serious people were prejudiced against the novel. How splendidly and completely occasion for reproach has been taken off literature we all know very well. Thackeray, while doing full justice to the splendid genius of Fielding and others, yet expresses his thankfulness for the literature within the reach of the young of the present day; a literature with all the ability of a bygone age, and with a purity and delicacy almost unknown before. Thanks to our great modern novelists, the prejudice against novel-reading is, for the most part, dying out fast. On the other hand, we need not shut our eyes to the fact that there is a class of literature, chiefly foreign, which deserves to be sternly suppressed.

What can we say of prejudices against the stage, billiards, and cards? We can truly assert that evil is not by any means necessarily attached to them; but, at the same time, we must in honesty admit that a great deal of harm has been wrought by them. They may be made splendid methods of recreation, and they may be made very potent instruments of degradation. How these are used will in great measure reflect the taste of the age or of the individual; and we may admit that their use ought to be strictly regulated, so that they cannot be abused. But it seems to savour a little of cant to talk of the stage being a great means of instruction. In our day there are abundant opportunities of instruction; let us keep the theatre for amusement, and honestly confess that we like being amused. Amusement may not instruct, but it need not degrade, nor reflect a degraded taste as it sometimes does.

It is worthy of remark how firmly names, indicative of ancient exploded notions, cleave to us, even after we know that they express an erroneous view. Certainly it would be pedantic to cease to speak of the motion of the sun when it apparently moves before our eyes; but take the case of the term "Centrifugal Force." This term will probably never go out of our nomenclature, because, as an eminent physicist remarked, it is an excellent name if we only remember that the phenomenon it represents is not centrifugal, and is not caused by force.

The opposite of a prejudiced mind is one

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that is open to conviction by adequate evidence, and characterised by a patience to weigh arguments and a readiness for self-criticism.

There is a story told of Coleridge, which illustrates the mode of argument frequently adopted by a prejudiced mind. Coleridge sat with Tieck, on one occasion, far into the night, discussing "Hamlet." Tieck unfolded his views with great skill and learning. Coleridge admitted the force of his opponent's arguments; but declared that he could not accept them.

"Why not?" asked Tieck, somewhat surprised.

"Because," rejoined Coleridge, with emphasis, "they contradict everything that has been said, written, or thought about 'Hamlet' in England."

Tieck may have been wrong; but the way to confute him was certainly not by the dogmatic assertion of national prejudices.

Yet it is one thing to preach, another thing to practise. Even if we be on our guard against prejudice in one direction, we are often likely to fall into it in another. Thackeray somewhere tells us that he wrote a paper on one occasion against believing evil stories of our neighbours. When he had finished the paper he went out and met a friend, who told him a scandalous story about an acquaintance, which story Thackeray tells us he immediately believed; and it was false after all.

In connection with prejudice it is as well for us to remember that strong prejudices are very often, though by no means always, the accompaniment of stupidity; so, if we hold strong opinions, it may be well for us to be sure of our ground. Stupidity is, no doubt, a great and useful gift, and certainly a man who combines stupidity and ignorance, "with a sound digestion," can afford to look down—as, indeed, he very often does—upon those who differ from him. Yet most of us would desire to be distinguished for some other quality; and ought, therefore, to bear in mind that "against stupidity the gods themselves fight to no purpose." So that if we are apparently unconquered in argument, that may be due only to our "invincible ignorance."

At all events, we may as well hold that there is a possibility of other people being right besides ourselves, and that there are always two sides, at least, to every question.

MONTE CARLO SKETCHES.

The visitor to Monte Carlo on the afternoon of a cloudless July day can do nothing better than sit out of doors in the shade, listen to the music of the casino, and look at his neighbours. It is a winsome prospect from the fair gardens at any time. You glance across the blue, bright sea of the little bay at the grey walls of Monaco on its peninsular rock. Whether it be midsummer or December, there is the same warm fringe of green pines at the crest of the rock, above the red roofs of the Government offices and barracks of the bantling principality. From Monte Carlo you cannot see the piles of cannon-balls which repose by the parapet of the town over against the bay. They are ordinarily the playground of the Monaco urchins; but, if need were, doubtless some of them could be propelled from the aged guns which likewise adorn the battlements, ere the guns burst from decrepitude and the intolerable effort put upon them by the powder of the artillery. But if the guns are invisible, the Cathedral is not. It swells in the midst of the town, stout rather than of Gothic stature. Perhaps you will regard it with less veneration when you know that it was built with money given by the gaming-tables. The administration of the casino feel that they must conciliate Heaven and public opinion; and so they have periodical fits of philanthropy and open-handedness which make the simple cry "Well done!" and the wise shake their sapient heads. Ask them for a subscription on behalf of some notorious need, and they will astound you with their generosity. They know full well that the world will hear of the benefaction. But entreat them for a napoleon to help the ruined gamester to return to his sad home, and they will lift their brows in amazement that you should make so preposterous a demand. The ruined man has the gardens at his disposal. They abound in shady nooks, and sequestered corners. No one need know until the morrow that he has taken his life among the palms; and even then the administration may be trusted to dispose of his remains as quietly as possible, without scandal. This and the like trains of thought radiate from the Cathedral of Monaco which one sees from the gardens. By-and-by it will ring sweet bells to charm the ears of the religious;

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and their music will join in symphony with that of the casino band.

Ah! what more genial method of lotus-eating can our most modern civilisation offer to the jaded man of the world than that of the terrace of the casino when the band is playing? He is in the midst of comedy and tragedy; and at the same time he may be as inert as he pleases, while his best senses are charmed. How the chiselled faces upon the gorgeous casino walls gape and gibe! I warrant their expression has taken strange significance in many a mind. Mark, too, yonder unobtrusive gentleman, in a coat rather shabby for these dapper regions. His hooked nose declares him an Israelite, and sharp as a hawk's is his glance ever and anon at the people of the nations whom he passes on the promenade by the sea. It would cost you years of practice ere you could tell as shrewdly as he which man has lost, and which man he may venture to address with timely proffer of a little loan at five hundred per cent. per annum. And throughout the passing to and fro, and the lotus-eating on chairs in the perfumed shade, the musicians of the casino play heavenly music, care-dispelling almost like the waters of Lethe.

Then one's neighbours! What tales they might recount to us, if they would! Some of them, however, need not open their mouths; their histories are sufficiently clear to the common eye. These handsome women, for example, with the stride of peacocks, and the unbridled gaze. How loud they talk! and, therefore, you may be sure there is nothing in their talk. It is another matter when they, too, have their prey well hooked. They can then be as discreet as a teacher of prudence. At such a time they will counsel the youthful to tempt fortune again and again, with a captivating earnestness that makes young male blood dance with determination and gratitude.

Would you be surprised to know that these houris, like the palm-trees, the music, and the croupiers, are an indispensable part of the properties of the casino? Many a man would carry hence the money he won at roulette but for the fair face that intercepted him in the gardens, and, on one pretext and another, engaged him in conversation, which she soon turned upon the subject of her heart and the administration's. And if these fair ones are engaging in the garish light of day, imagine the force of their attraction and their potency for evil when the casino is ablaze with lamps, and their diamonds are only outmatched in radiance by the lustre of their eyes.

Yonder youth again, seated in a listless attitude of despair, has his story, or something of it, written legibly enough in his clouded face. Not for him is the charm of the sweetest music that ever was scored. The breeze from the sea must blow to his soul ere it cool his hot nature. Lost? Yes, of course he has lost. And yet it was his first visit. He thought that he could master Chance and the bank by the aid of simple arithmetic. He entered the "rooms" with a couple of thousand francs, upon which he hoped, nay, was determined, to build another two thousand at the least. Merry as a marriage-bell went the game in his favour at the outset. How odd that it should be so, in nine cases out of ten! And how humiliating to our nature that, spite of strong resolution, not one player in fifty has the wisdom to withdraw ere the fatal turn comes upon him! And so, anon, our youth had amassed a thousand francs to add to his capital. You should have seen the light in his eyes, when, for a moment, he withdrew to count his gains, and had reckoned up the total. There was a touch of the hero in him then; there is little of the hero in him now. Why did he not go forth into the gardens in the hour of his triumph, and never return to the tables? Ah! echo and philosophers may answer the riddle, which is an enduring one. He preferred to revert to the tables; and, in another hour, he has emptied his pockets; and so now he sits, with a dull heart, angry to frenzy with himself, the administration, and all the world. He does not know which mocks him the most: the music, the grinning masks on the seaward walls of the casino, or the light, triumphant tones of his more fortunate brethren as they pace arm-in-arm before him, cigarette in mouth. Poor boy! he should return to his mother, and learn another lesson or two of homely wisdom.

Look now at that fine stalwart Englishman in the prime of life, walking in the middle of the gravel-path that leads to the band-stand. The music is nothing to him, either—not even a distraction. He is an inveterate gambler. You may have seen him here a year ago, a month ago, or yesterday. But his mood to-day is quite exceptional. He is busy with his record, like so many others with their records. The last hour

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has been a bad one for him. Ordinarily he is cautious as a hare, and quite on his guard against the unkinder freaks of fate. The word "cool" is, ordinarily, a word too warm to be applied to him. But a something has played his nature false. It may have been the scirocco of Wednesday. It may have been the letter he received that afternoon. It may be — anything. No matter what it is. The change has been wrought, and that suffices. His mental balance got unhinged. Perhaps it was due to the suggestion that once and for all he might end his actual course of life. Whatever it was, this very day he put all his accumulated funds—the residue of two or three years' earnings—upon "red," in three stakes, duplicated progressively. He has nothing left except a couple of crowns.

Do but try to imagine his state of mind. You cannot approach the reality; but you may come within viewing distance of it. I avow that earth can afford him no suffering more acute than his at this moment. There is no saying what he will do in the next four-and-twenty hours. And meanwhile the band sweetens the air with Donizetti's Overture to the "Fille du Régiment." Talk about the irony of life! One week at Monte Carlo gives the phrase a piquancy of signification it may get nowhere else.

And yet what strange creatures of habit and successful creatures of civilisation we are, to be sure! Mark this man, ruined beyond hope of recovery, and to whom life is now like a spent candle. He has walked enough; he sits down, calm to the eye, and with so courteous a demeanour of tranquillity that his neighbour — a spinster citizeness from Paris, arrived by an excursion train to see the "Monsters" of the gaming-tables—ventures to remark to him upon the state of the weather. He replies to her; the conversation advances methodically; and soon they are in close colloquy. The worthy citizeness would assuredly swoon were she told that she is thus finding casual entertainment with a man who, meantime, is considering with himself whether he shall put the pistol to his head in the casino gardens, or in the bedroom of his hotel.

When the music pauses, the chairs are vacated largely. Hot though it is, the seduction within is irresistible. The noise of hammering sounds from one side of the casino. You ask what it indicates. "If Monsieur will return to Monte Carlo in the spring of next year," replies the attendant, "he will see the result of it in the new saloon. There are to be four additional tables." Grist for the mill, with a vengeance! His Highness, the Prince of Monaco, receives a fresh "donation" from the administration for every fresh table it opens to the world. On such an understanding, no doubt he would like to see the principality entirely bespread with the furniture of roulette, and the bold crags which rise from the sea levelled to admit of more land to lease for gambling.

But ere you have gasped more than once or twice in the close atmosphere of the "rooms," you perceive that a player "out of the common" is present. One of the tables has a thicker ring of men and women about it than the rest. Now and then you see a movement among these spectators. Some raise their shoulders in a half-wondering and half-compassionating manner. Others look at each other and smile, pout their lips, or shake their heads. At heart, however, the majority of the bystanders care not at all whether the gamester, who is amusing them by his recklessness, wins or loses.

The hero of the table stands and plays at one end of it. The other players are quite subsidiary to him. The croupiers keep them waiting quite an annoying length of time, while this more important prey arranges his various investments upon the green cloth. He puts a pile of gold upon one number; a hundred-franc note apiece upon several other numbers; he hedges by speculating upon the up-turn of any one of six additional numbers; and, finally, he throws five notes, of a thousand francs each, upon "red," and five similar notes upon "odd." He has in all about five hundred pounds at stake. Not much, you say. That may be; but he has played for hours already; and at five hundred pounds, upon an average, twice in five minutes, one may, in an afternoon, lose or gain a small fortune.

By this the turn of the wheel is declared. Our friend wins five thousand francs, and loses seven thousand five hundred. He is a hundred pounds to the bad, which, though irritating, is not quite ruinous. The next time he determines to be bolder and more discriminate. He puts five thousand francs on "red," and the same amount on "odd." He wins on both. Some one says "Bravo!" "Oh, it is time he recoups a little," is the remark of a

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neighbour. "I have seen him lose a quarter of a million during the last week—not a sou less!" How this changes the aspect of affairs! It explains only too sufficiently the coolness with which he gathers together the ten thousand francs, and stuffs the notes into his pocket. Monsieur Blanc, had he been alive, would have foretold you this man's end with the assurance of one who knew every species of gambler developed by human nature. "He cannot fight against me, the bank; and when once he enters into campaign with me, he shows himself a fool." That is what he would have said.

If the gamesters of Monte Carlo were not, as a rule, lost to all self-respect, surely the knowledge of the contempt in which the administration holds them would make them shake the dust of the casino from their feet! It takes their money without a word of thanks, when they lose. When they win, it flings them their winnings with the like indifference; and when they are stripped, it disowns them. "What are you to us?" it says to the ruined man who begs a pittance from it. In this matter, Monte Carlo is even less respectable than those famous old haunts of Wiesbaden, Homburg, and Baden Baden. There, at any rate, the poor fellow who had emptied his pockets and lost his inheritance, or its worth, at the tables, was provided with a railway-ticket and a trifle of money, that he might return to his friends. Never mind what the motive that led to such action on the part of the German authorities; the action itself was good. But at Monte Carlo, it is otherwise. And it has even been said that the majority of the cases of suicide in the casino gardens are "due to the peremptory refusal of the casino to yield to the entreaties of the ruined men for the means to return home." The Golgotha of the Riviera is thus more diabolical and brutal than its predecessors. One could imagine that the gentlemen of the administration are in such mortal terror and apprehension of being suppressed, that they fancy they cannot afford even the miserable charity of a few crown pieces to the man from whom they have received tens of thousands.

The visitor to the casino who thinks to see marks of the shame they ought to feel on the faces of the gamblers, will be disillusioned completely. It is only the novices who blush when they venture a coin. And nowhere does the bloom of innocence disappear so briskly as in this exotic atmosphere. The novice of twelve o'clock will, by sunset, argue you deaf about his system, and grasp his winnings with the feline quickness of the elderly women who sit night after night at the tables to earn their livelihood. Now and then, to be sure, an unassuming person, with a veiled face, tries her fortune. You can tell by the trembling of her hand that she is grievously in earnest; and by the veil that she is not an "habituée." And whether she wins or loses, you may be sure that the colour is in her cheeks behind her veil. Such an one is an easy prey for the harpies who make it their profession to lay sudden hands upon the gains of others, and who are prepared to swear black is white on behalf of their pockets.

So the evening hurries on—ever hotter and hotter—to the monotonous clink of gold, and the murmur of low voices. Time gallops in the casino, as perhaps nowhere else, except in lovers' lanes. Already, the clock points to half-past ten. There is but another half-hour ere the tables are cloaked for the night, and the doors are shut for the administration to count its gains and securely bank them.

Now is the time for the man who has stolidly backed a number for hour after hour—and all in vain—to move restlessly upon his chair. He is bound, by all the rules of precedent, to continue his hard and thankless task; but if eleven o'clock comes ere he is repaid, and cuts the thread of his long-enduring hopes, what then? Why, again in accordance with precedent, he must resume his work on the morrow. So mad are they who think they can bring Chance upon her knees to them!

As the hand of the clock moves upward, more and more nervous and irresponsible grow the players. One would suppose they feared to die in the night, and that their future state was dependent upon their success ere the casino closed. There is wrangling between player and player; the croupiers perspire with anxiety to keep the peace; and at each distribution of winnings there is an unseemly scramble between hands legitimate and the hands of robbers. One player, more obstinate than the rest, loudly declares his wrong. "It is infamous!" he shouts; and he will not be comforted until an advising member of the administration counsels the payment of his claims. Five minutes later, however, the same person renews his plea. He has

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been robbed a second time; and a second time he urges the bank to satisfy him. But this is too much, even for a long-suffering administration eager to make all fit sacrifice to public opinion. After a short, sharp struggle, the roguish player is ejected from the rooms; nor do the casino soldiers forsake him until he is past the frontier of the principality. He is warned that he will imperil his liberty if he reappears in Monte Carlo.

"The last time, gentlemen! Make your game!"

We are close upon eleven now. The rooms are insufferably close, and the patchouli and perfumes of the women add to the heaviness of the air. A hundred hands seem outstretched over the table and struggling with each other for space on which to set the crowns or gold pieces they hold. It is a cataclysmic moment. Heads are bent forward, and eager eyes watch the run of the ball, to mark its destination ere the croupier declares it. As for the partition of the spoil, that is a scene to remember.

Eleven o'clock sees strange sights in the gambling rooms of the casino. It is a relief to get into the open, and breathe the pure air of a world that is happily not all defiled by the administration.

SOME REMARKABLE ESCAPES.

It is said that the earliest instance of an escape from captivity, effected under remarkable conditions, is that of the soothsayer Hegesistratus, which Herodotus relates with his characteristic simplicity of style. He had, in times past, says the Father of History, done much evil to the Spartans, so that the latter had seized upon him, and put him in irons, previous to punishing him with death. His feet were fastened in clogs of wood, loaded with iron, in order to prevent him from attempting to escape. But an iron bar, with a sharp edge, having accidentally been left in his dungeon, he got hold of it, and conceived the most courageous action of which, says Herodotus, I have ever heard; for he cut away enough of the flesh and bone of each foot to enable him to extricate it from its shackles, and then, digging a hole through the prison wall, he escaped to Tegæa, walking only under cover of night, and during the day hiding in the woods. He reached that town on the third night, in spite of the pursuit, in every direction, undertaken by the Lacedemonians, who were extremely astonished at his daring, on seeing half of his foot left bleeding in each shackle. As soon as he was cured, he had wooden feet made, and became the declared enemy of the Lacedemonians.

In the sixth century of our era, Kavades, King of Persia, was imprisoned by his rebellious subjects in the Tower of Oblivion; so called because no one was allowed to utter the name of any person consigned to its solitude. His wife obtained permission to visit him, and carry him whatever things he stood in need of; and being a woman of great beauty, she found such favour in the eyes of the gaoler, that she was allowed to go to and fro as she pleased. Among the Persians was a man named Seoses, a steadfast friend of the King, who remained within the immediate neighbourhood of the castle, watching for an opportunity to save him, and, for this purpose, keeping his horse ready saddled. At length, on a certain night, Kavades persuaded his wife to lend him her clothes, while she dressed herself in his, and took his place in the prison cell. Unchallenged he passed his guards, who supposed him to be his wife; and next day, when they saw her seated in the cell, attired in her husband's robes, they mistook her for Kavades, nor discovered their error for some days, so that he had time to find a secure retreat. "I do not know," says Procopius, "what befell his wife, when the fraud was discovered, nor how she was punished, since the Persians do not agree on this point." We suppose this is the earliest instance of a stratagem by which many prisoners—as, for instance, Lavallette and Lord Kilmarnock—have escaped from their bonds.

A stirring story is told by the French chronicler, Guillaume de Jumiége, in his "Histoire des Normands," which may be new to some of our readers. Louis d'Outre-mer, coveting the patrimony of Richard, son of William Longsword, Duke of Normandy (assassinated in 943), contrived to get the young Prince into his power. This became known to Osmond, the young Prince's governor, who, foreseeing the fate impending over him, despatched messengers to the Normans, with the information that Richard was held in bondage by the French King, at Laon. As soon as the news became known, a three days' fast was ordered throughout

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all Normandy, and the Church addressed incessant petitions to heaven on the young Prince's behalf. At length, Osmond, after consulting with Yvon de Belesme, persuaded the child to feign illness, to take to his bed, and to appear so overcome by his disease that everybody should despair of his recovery. The child played his part with great intelligence, lying day after day in his bed, as if reduced to the last extremity. Seeing him in this apparently moribund condition, his keepers relaxed in their surveillance, and betook themselves to the care of their own concerns. There happened to be in the courtyard a heap of grass, and, opportunity offering, Osmond wrapped the child up in it, and putting the bale on his shoulders, as if it were fodder for his horse, he passed beyond the walls of the town, while the King was at supper and the townsfolk absent from the public places. No sooner had he gained his friend's house than he sprang on a horse, and with the child in front of him, galloped into the night, nor drew rein until he placed the young Prince in safety in the Castle of Couci.

Louis the Second, Count of Flanders, who, in 1346, at the age of sixteen, had succeeded to the throne, was, in the following January, kept a close prisoner by the men of Ghent, because he refused to comply with their wish, that he should marry Isabella, daughter of our Edward the Second.

Long, says Froissart, was the young Prince in danger from these Flemings, and straitly imprisoned; and it wearied him, for he had not been bred to it. At length, he changed his purpose; I know not whether he did so from craft or goodwill; but he told his people that he would follow their counsel, since more advantage came to him from them than from any other country. At these words the Flemings were very glad; so they sometimes let him out of prison, and allowed him certain liberties, as, for instance, to ride down by the river, to which he much inclined; but he was always guarded closely, to prevent him from escaping them. And thus things continued, until he intimated to his people that he would willingly take to wife the King of England's daughter.

Meanwhile, he rode constantly along the river-side; and, as he made believe that the projected marriage pleased him exceedingly, the Flemings began to feel secure, and watched him less strictly than before. But they did not understand their lord's character, for, whatever he might pretend to be to the onlooker, he had within him a courage truly French, which he proved by his deeds. For one day he had gone down by the river, as usual, to fly his falcons, and it was in the week in which he was to marry the damosel of England, and his falconer cast a falcon after the heron, and the Count did the same. And, having let loose these two falcons on the chase, the Count followed, as if to encourage them, crying "Hoie! hoie!" And when he had ridden some distance, and had the advantage of an open country before him, he struck his spurs sharply into his horse's flanks, and broke into a gallop, dashing onward and onward until his guards lost sight of him. And he rode away to Artois, where he was safe, and then he crossed into France and told his adventures to King Philip, and how by great subtlety he had escaped from his subjects and from the English. The King of France rejoiced thereat, and said that he had done well; and so said the French; but the English, on the other hand, declared that he had betrayed them.

The escape of Prince Edward (Edward the First) from the custody of Simon de Montfort and the Barons, is a familiar story. He was at Hereford, in May, 1265, in charge of Thomas de Clare—whom De Montfort fully trusted—of Robert de Ros, and Henry de Montfort. Having received —from De Clare, it is said, under a fictitious name—a present of a horse of very fine qualities, he expressed a wish to try its speed against the best horses of his companions. The trial took place on a plain to the north of the town, called the Widmarsh. Mounting the steeds of the young nobles, one after another, he galloped them to and fro until they were thoroughly exhausted. A horseman then appeared on a neighbouring hill and waved his hat—a preconcerted signal. The Prince immediately leaped on his own horse and rode away for his life, flinging a farewell jest at his discomfited guardians:

> Lordlings, good day, greet my father, and say,
> Out of thrall I will see him as soon as I may.

Speedily outstripping the tired horses of his pursuers, he effected his escape to Roger Mortimer's castle of Wigmore.

Roger Mortimer, of Wigmore, having been taken prisoner at the battle of Boroughbridge, March 16th, 1322, was thrown into the Tower. In the following

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year he received secret intelligence that his death had been determined upon, and resolved to attempt his escape. A heavy bribe secured the co-operation of Gerard Apsley, one of the officers, who, in the wine of the banquet, given to the guards, administered a sleeping draught. While they slept, Mortimer, through an opening which he had effected in the wall of his apartment, penetrated into the kitchen and got out into the open court. With the help of a rope ladder, he climbed and descended the walls of the great fortress, and at last stood on the river-bank, where a boat was in waiting to carry him across the Thames. There he found his horses and servants, and, riding across the Surrey Hills, and through the woods of Hampshire, he gained the coast, embarked on board a vessel, which had been hired for him, and found an asylum in France.

James the Third of Scotland, alarmed by a prediction that a lion in Scotland—a lion, as everybody knows, was the crest of the Scottish Kings—would be put to death by the young lions, and suspicious of the influence and authority of his brothers—the Duke of Albany and the Earl of Mar—caused the latter to be suffocated in a bath, and imprisoned the former in Edinburgh Castle. Albany was in danger of sharing his brother's fate, but some of his friends prepared a plan for his deliverance. A small sloop entered Leith Roads, with a cargo of Gascony wine, two casks of which were sent as a present to the captive Prince. On examining them he found in one a large ball of wax, and inside this ball was a letter, urging him to escape, and promising that the vessel which had brought the wine should be ready to take him on board, if he could get down to the shore. It besought him to delay not a moment, because he was to lose his head on the following day. A coil of rope was also enclosed in the same cask, that he might lower himself from the Castle ramparts to the foot of the romantic Rock which now forms such a picturesque object from Princes Street. His chamberlain, who was devoted to his master, shared his captivity, and promised to assist him in his perilous enterprise.

The principal point was to make sure of the Captain of the guard. For this purpose, Albany invited him to sup with him and taste the red Bordeaux wine which had just arrived from the vineyards of southern France. After stationing his sentinels at their various posts, the Captain entered the Duke's chamber, accompanied by three soldiers, and enjoyed the viands set before him. The three joined the Prince in a game of tric-trac, or backgammon, and, seated by a blazing fire and overcome by the strong wine, which the chamberlain assiduously served, the Captain fell asleep, as likewise did his soldiers, to whom the cup had been supplied with no niggard hand. Then the Duke of Albany, a robust young man, whose strength was doubled by the need, sprang to his feet, and struck the Captain, with his dagger, a mortal blow. Two of the soldiers fell before his sudden attack, and the third being despatched by the chamberlain, their bodies were thrown upon the fire. Taking the keys from the Captain's pocket, the fugitives soon got clear of the Castle, and chose a corner of the ramparts out of sight of the sentinels to accomplish their perilous descent.

The chamberlain insisted on trying the rope, by descending first; but it was too short. He fell and broke his thigh, and called out to his master to lengthen the rope. Albany returned to his chamber, took the coverlets from his bed, fastened them to the rope, and arrived safe and sound at the foot of the Castle rock. He carried his chamberlain on his shoulders to a place of security, where he could lie concealed until he had recovered from his accident, and then hastened down to the sea-shore, embarked on board the sloop, and immediately sailed for France.

Francis Alard, a Lutheran theologian, of the sixteenth century, having been condemned to death by the Inquisition, was carried back to prison to pass there the three days which he had still to live. The night before the day appointed for his martyrdom he thought he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Francis, arise and go forth." He rose, and the moonlight revealing an opening in the wall which he had not before detected, he satisfied himself that he could squeeze his body through it. With his linen he twisted a rope, which he attached to the iron bars of the fireplace, and, having thrown his clothes to the bottom of the tower, lowered himself into a drain, passed near the sentinel without being perceived, and finally, after remaining for three days without food, concealed in a thicket, was picked up by a waggoner, and succeeded in reaching the province

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of Oldenburg, where he was appointed almoner to the reigning Prince.

This remarkable escape, which has a touch of the marvellous about it, is described by Nicholas Alard, a descendant of its hero, in his "Decas Alardorum Scriptis Clarorum" (1721).

Cœlius Secundus Curion, a zealous Lutheran, having had the boldness to convict of falsehood, in open church, at Casal, a monk who had indulged in the most calumnious insinuations against the great leader of the German Reformation, was immediately arrested by order of the inquisitor of Turin. After having been transferred successively to several prisons, he contrived to escape in a manner so skilful and unexpected, that his enemies accused him of having had recourse to magic. As this was an accusation not less dangerous than that of heresy, Curion hastened to exculpate himself by publishing the details of his enterprise in a short Latin dialogue, entitled "Probus." The following extracts will satisfy the reader's curiosity:

"In my new prison I had been confined for a week, with huge pieces of wood chained to my feet, where I was favoured with a sudden inspiration from Heaven.

"As soon as the young man who acted as my keeper entered my chamber, I begged and prayed of him to release one of my feet from its encumbrances. It would be sufficient security, I said, that I should still by the other foot be fastened to an enormous log. As he was a humane sort of fellow, he consented, and set one foot free. A day, two days passed, during which I applied myself to work. Taking off my shirt, and also the stocking from the leg which was at liberty, I made them up into a dummy resembling a leg, on which I put a shoe. I was in want of something, however, to give it consistency, and was anxiously looking about in all directions, when I caught sight of a cane-stick lying under a row of seats. Seizing it joyfully, I inserted it into the sham limb, and concealing the true one under my cloak, waited the result of my stratagem. When my young keeper made his appearance next morning, he asked me how I was. 'I should do pretty well,' I said, 'if you would be good enough to put my fetters on the other leg, so that each may have a rest in turn.' He assented; and, without perceiving it, attached the log to the dummy."

At night, when their loud snores informed him that his gaolers were asleep, Curion threw aside the false leg, resumed his shirt and stocking, and opened noiselessly the prison door, which was fastened by a simple bolt. Afterwards, though not without difficulty, he scaled the wall, and got away without interruption.

After the assassination of Henry of Guise at Blois, in 1088, Charles, his eldest son and heir, was arrested and confined in the Castle of Tours, whence, three years afterwards, he accomplished his escape.

The Duke, says the historian De Thou, arranged with Claude de la Chastre and his son to make the attempt on August the fifteenth, the Feast of the Virgin, and the better to deceive his guards, and prevent any suspicion of his design, he partook in the morning of the Holy Sacrament. He had observed that the gates were always closed after dinner, and the keys carried to the provost. This fixed the time for making his bid for life and freedom. In hot haste he mounted a lofty tower, which looked upon the bridge outside the town; and having shut up his guards in the mess-room, where they were eating and drinking, he bolted the door of the tower after him, so that while they were breaking it open he might secure more time for his escape. Everything went "as merry as a marriage-bell." His valet-de-chambre, who attended him, wound the end of a rope that he had prepared round a piece of wood, placed horizontally, on which the Duke sat astride, and was lowered safely and softly to the ground. Then, unpursued, he tramped along by the river-side, and before long fell in with two men, who waited for him with a noble horse. In a moment he was away like an arrow, riding across country, until he was joined by the son of Claude de Chastre, with three hundred cavaliers, who accompanied him to Bourges.

The famous scholar, Grotius, or De Groot, having been involved in the political strife which caused the death of the patriot Barneveldt, so powerfully described by Mr. Lothrop Motley, was arrested in the month of August, 1618, and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment on May the eighteenth, 1619. A fortnight afterwards, he was imprisoned in the Castle of Loevestein, where he was treated with shameful severity. However, as he was permitted to continue his studies, his friends devised

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the means of keeping up a secret correspondence with him; and his deliverance was at length effected through the ingenuity and patience of his noble-hearted wife, Maria of Regensburg. Her quick eye had remarked that the soldiers after awhile grew weary of constantly examining and searching the great trunk of books and linen which was sent weekly to be changed at Gorcum, a neighbouring town, and at length suffered it to pass without inspection. She therefore suggested to her husband that he should hide himself in this trunk, first boring a sufficient number of holes in the lid over the place where his head would be, to admit fresh air, and prevent him from being suffocated.

He acted on her advice (March twenty-first, 1621); safely passed the sentinels; and was conveyed to a friend's house at Gorcum; whence he went on to Antwerp by the ordinary post, having passed through the public market disguised as a joiner, with rule in hand. His clever wife pretended that her husband was ill, in order to give time for his flight, and to delay pursuit; she appeared to attend upon the invalid with laudable affection; nor was it until she felt convinced he must be beyond the reach of danger, that she told the guards, with a mocking laugh, "the bird had flown."

At first the authorities were fain to proceed against her on a criminal charge, and some of the judges were in favour of detaining her prisoner as her husband's substitute; but, by a majority of votes, her release was decreed, and all the world joined in a chorus of admiration at her conjugal devotion. The advocates of woman's rights may point, with pride, to the fact that numerous husbands have owed their escape from captivity to the courage and resource of their wives, whereas it is doubtful if any wives have owed their liberty to the action of their husbands. As for the Frau De Groot, it has justly been said that she deserves, in the commonwealth of letters, not only a statue, but also the honours of canonisation; since, to her address and resolution, the world owes the numerous admirable works of her learned husband, which would never have seen the light of day if he had ended his career within the gloomy walls of Loevestein.

In all these examples of remarkable escapes in peril, the same qualities were brought into requisition by their heroes—great coolness, presence of mind, determination, and ready invention. And all these were displayed by Isaac Arnauld, Governor of Phillipsburg, who, after the capture of that fortress by the Imperialists, in 1633, was removed to Esslingen.

During his captivity he learned that gross calumnies were being fastened on his name at Court, and the knowledge stimulated him to seek some means of escape, that he might confute them by his presence. With this view he refused to become a prisoner on parole. His prospects of success were anything but bright, he was guarded with so much strictness — soldiers accompanying him when he took his daily exercise, and sleeping in the corridor at his chamber door. But he bated not one jot of heart or hope. Measuring, with his eye, the height of the window, which overlooked the town-moat, he felt certain that, if he could lower himself from it, he might recover his liberty; for, as Esslingen lay in the interior and out of reach of any sudden attack from an enemy, the moat was very loosely guarded. The difficulty was to obtain a sufficient length of rope.

For this purpose he bethought himself of setting his guards to join in various games, pretending that it was for his amusement; and, as he supplied them with drink, they were by no means loth. Among these games was one which the French call sangler l'âne (strapping the ass), and it proved to be the very thing for the object he had in view. A few yards of cord being wanted to bind one of the players, he readily supplied the money to purchase the necessary quantity, and as it was of no particular use, it was thrown away when the game was over. Some French officers in the Imperial service—whom Arnauld had gained over — contrived, with jokes and laughter, to make an excuse for picking it up, and it was afterwards conveyed stealthily to Arnauld's chamber. This stratagem was repeated until he had collected enough to answer his object. He then warned his associates to be on the alert; lowered himself, under cover of night, into the moat; was joined by them, with horses; and the whole party got safely away into French territory.

These stories, we hope, have not been without interest to the reader, as illustrating the courage and ingenuity which circumstances will sometimes develope; the hardships which men will endure, and

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the hazards they will encounter, in order to regain their liberty. Freedom, says the old Scotch poet, is a noble thing; and to many minds death is preferable to the loss of it. At all events, nothing seems too desperate for them to attempt, in order to recover it.

IN A PLACE OF SECURITY.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

BY FREDERICK TALBOT.

CHAPTER II.

AN account of the disastrous end of the Cornely Expedition, drawn from the narrative of the sole survivor, appeared in the morning papers, and brought to Louise many letters of sympathy and regret. But it brought also a visitor, who, disregarding the protestations of the servants that the family were in great affliction, and could see nobody, forced himself into the hall, and insisted on an interview with Miss Cornely.

When Louise consented to see him, he introduced himself as Mr. Papyrus, a friend and admirer of the unfortunate deceased. So great had been his admiration and friendship, that he had advanced to Mr. Cornely the sums requisite for the expenses of his expedition. These sums amounted altogether to ten thousand pounds, for which he held bills signed by Mr. Cornely, none of which had been paid.

Louise was thunderstruck at the magnitude of the claim, but she tried to explain that she knew nothing of her father's pecuniary affairs, and that her aunt, who might be better informed, was too ill to be questioned upon the matter.

"But that will not do for me!" thundered Mr. Papyrus. He was stout, oily, middle-aged, with a beak like a vulture's, and a manner that was alternately fawning and threatening. "I must have my money, or, if not money, I will have security. Come, my dear," he said, assuming suddenly his wheedling manner. "Your father was rich, no doubt; he had bonds, shares, plenty of stuff. You look, my dear, and find them, and I shall have just what will cover my debt that you owe me. Or, if you do not so," he thundered, seeing no acquiescence in the girl's face—"yes, I will have judgement, execution, and I will put you all into the street."

All this was very alarming, especially as Mr. Papyrus could by no means be persuaded to go, but remained in possession of the drawing-room, poking his nose into everything, appraising the bric-à-brac, tapping and sounding the furniture, sneering at the pictures, and every now and then pausing to roar:

"I will have my money! Where are my ten shousant pounts?"

Luigi was routed in a moment, when he attempted to dismiss the unwelcome visitor, and he retired to the kitchen to sharpen a knife, which he declared should reach the miscreant's heart. Constantia advised concession.

"Let us search your father's cabinet," she said; "we shall find, no doubt, evidence of the wealth he has left. We will show this to your Mr. Papyrus, and he will be pacified."

While this was going on, Colonel Shepstone called, and asked if he could be of any service to the ladies. Louise welcomed him, and explained the dilemma she was in.

"Of course the man must go," said the Colonel, inwardly congratulating himself that he had so cleverly put an end to Bertie's entanglement. And by dint of judicious firmness, the Colonel prevailed on Papyrus to leave the house. But he went, threatening that he would come again on the morrow, armed with the powers of the law, and sweep them all into the street.

And the Colonel advised Louise to follow her friend's advice, and make diligent search in order to discover a will, or some evidence of her late father's actual position. In the meantime, Colonel Shepstone undertook to see the late Mr. Cornely's bankers, who happened to be also his own.

"They are all paupers together," said the Colonel, swinging his stick as he went along. "Would a man borrow of a usurer if he had any available funds of his own?"

Certainly, the report of the bankers threw no light upon the matter. Mr. Cornely had always kept a good balance; but it was getting very low at present, as Miss Cornely had drawn cheques from time to time, and there had been no recent payments to its credit, and they held no securities of his. The Colonel returned with his report, and ascertained that the search among Mr. Cornely's papers had produced nothing of any value.

"Then, my dear Miss Cornely," said the Colonel, "you must really face the matter calmly. With your accomplishments and culture you will have no difficulty in finding employment as a teacher. As for your aunt, should she recover, I have some interest with the asylum for decayed gentlewomen. Give your servants

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notice at once; go to your bankers and draw what balance you have, to keep something in hand; and abandon everything else to the creditors."

The advice was good, no doubt, but it was none the less a counsel of despair. Louise felt herself bowed to the ground with sorrow and humiliation, when she felt a gentle throb in her bosom. Was her amulet there, and safe? Yes, she felt it under her dress, and, at the same time, caught a strange, searching glance from Constantia, who stood meekly by.

"No one has thought about me; people must look after themselves," was what the look might have said.

Louise hastened to dismiss the Colonel, and, shutting herself in her own room and locking the door carefully, threw herself upon her knees, and took the amulet from about her neck. It was but a straw she clutched at, as one who drowns; but even a straw gives the struggling arms a moment's strength.

"Dear father," she said, looking upwards, "you would not surely have left me penniless and unprotected to the mercy of polished gentlemen and unpolished rogues."

And with that she opened the casket, as she had been instructed, by touching a secret spring; and there fell out a key and a paper.

"Dear daughter," was written in the paper, "take this key, go alone secretly, and yet at midday, when the City is busiest. The address is engraved upon this key. Demand Secretary, produce this key and this letter, and be guided by what you see and hear. Thine affectionate father,

"LUCIEN CORNELY."

It was too late to go this day; but to-morrow Louise would surely go, and in the meantime to keep the key and letter safe. As her father had warned her, she could not close the casket, and, therefore, could not wear it or replace the key within it. And she felt, deprived of her charm, a certain dread and insecurity. She fancied, too, that Constantia was watching her intently. George, too, came, to seek an interview. He had clothed himself in deep mourning, and looked very handsome and interesting with his wounded arm.

George had heard of the visit of the inexorable Papyrus; and now, with feelings of the greatest diffidence and humility, he had come to lay himself at the feet of Louise. He could give her a home, at all events; an honest if not a splendid home. For he had already obtained an appointment in the City, which secured him a competence. Her father's last words to him had been: "Guard my treasure." By which he understood him to mean, not the treasures he had recovered from the earth, but that more precious treasure of a daughter, left at home. But how could he guard and protect her unless she gave him a husband's right? There would be a home also for his master's beloved sister.

George spoke well, and with such earnestness and humility, that Louise was profoundly touched, contrasting his disinterested conduct with the desertion of her fair-weather lover—for such she was compelled to think Bertie had been. And had she not wronged Constantia, who perhaps, as well as her brother, was one of her few true friends? There was no talisman, now, at her bosom, to give a warning of dangers. But her own instincts forbade her to accept such an offer, and she told George, with many kind words, that she could never be more than a friend to him. Then the young man's true nature broke forth. He began to threaten, to hint darkly that she and all belonging to her were in his power, and that she might come to beg for what she now refused.

Louise indignantly rang for Luigi to show the young man out: a service which the serving-man performed with much secret joy, and so zealously that he followed him down the staircase and even into the street, and round the corner beyond, to make sure that he quitted the neighbourhood. "And, signorita," he cried, breathless, on his return, "the young rascal and the old one are together. The wretched Papyrus was waiting for him, and they walked away in company."

That night Nurse Blake insisted on sleeping in her young mistress's room, while Luigi wrapped himself up in a rug and slept in the passage outside the door, the knife he had so carefully sharpened for Papyrus lying ready to his hand. But nothing occurred of a disturbing character.

True to his promise, Papyrus appeared next morning, soon after breakfast, but he was unaccompanied by the myrmidons of the law. He was in a more melting mood than before; protested that he was being ruined by this delay; and plaintively raised his voice every now and then to cry: "Where are my ten shousant pounts?"

Louise slipped away and left the man to talk to the four walls; and, having charged Nurse Blake to keep a watch on Luigi, and take his knife away if he began to get

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angry, she put on the least noticeable costume she had, and started for the City. On the very staircase she met Bertie.

Bertie had come the moment he heard of her trouble, and he had everything arranged. He had bullied his Colonel into a fortnight's leave; and before the end of that time they would have a home of their own, and they could snap their fingers at all the rest of the world.

"But all that was impossible," said Louise. Still, she was heartily glad to see him, only she could not stop to talk to him now. She really was about important business, and he must not offer to accompany her, or ask where she was going.

Bertie grumbled, but submitted.

"Well, I shall walk about here till you come back."

Louise assured him that he would get tired long before that; but left him in very good humour, and quite sure that he should prevail on her to carry out his plans when they had been fully explained to her. But hardly was Louise out of sight, when Bertie caught sight of a young man who had evidently been watching Russell Mansions, and who cautiously followed in the track of the young lady who had just left them. A dark, handsome-looking fellow, too. Bertie and George Melitus had never met—but the former was quite sure that this was the man; and the inference plainly was that Louise had gone out to meet him. An access of jealous rage came over Herbert Shepstone; but a moment's calmer thought brought the conviction that this was not the right explanation of the matter. And then, although forbidden to follow Louise, he determined to keep in sight the man who was shadowing her.

The dark young man took a hansom, and Bertie followed his example, telling the driver to keep the other one in sight. The first cab was evidently following an omnibus; and when it stopped, and a young lady got out at the corner, the young man dismissed his cab, and followed at a respectful distance on foot; and Bertie did precisely the same. Bertie kept his eyes fixed on the felt hat of the dark young man, and would see nothing beyond; and yet he could not help noticing that the original young lady was ascending the steps of a large building in Nisi-Prius Lane. By this time he had almost come up with his quarry, who had now stopped, and who was watching the young lady's entrance into the building.

"I have it now!" he exclaimed, with irrepressible exultation.

Evidently he had found out what he wanted to know; and now he turned suddenly in the opposite direction, and disappeared. Bertie, too, felt that he had no more business here; and wandered slowly eastwards.

Meantime Louise had found her mission unexpectedly easy. She found the address indicated on the key without any difficulty. It was that of the offices of the "Securities Deposit Company." And she was received very courteously by the secretary, who remembered perfectly that Mr. Cornely had a safe in their establishment, and that he had registered the name of his daughter as joint tenant of the safe, having paid a couple of years' rent in advance. Mr. Cornely had, also, according to custom, furnished the Company with a photograph of his co-tenant, a glance at which was decisive of the young lady's identity. And presently Louise was handed over to the care of an attendant, who led the way through a bewildering maze of dry, well-lighted vaults, and at last pointed out the safe, the number of which corresponded with that on her key.

The key fitted, the locks flew easily back, the heavy iron door swung open. What had Louise expected to find? She hardly knew. What she actually did see was not very formidable. Simply a number of bundles of papers, enclosed within bands of the same material—stiff, crackling papers, with strange watermarks, and stamped in various colours. Then she caught sight of a large envelope, open, and marked simply "Louise." Within was a long list of bonds and shares, and a letter which she eagerly read before looking at anything else. "Dear Louise," ran the letter, "don't hesitate to take possession of the little fortune I leave for you here. It was your mother's, and therefore rightly yours at my death. I have never fully told you the history of my marriage, so listen now. Your mother was the daughter of a rich Armenian banker—the only daughter by his first marriage; but there was a second wife, a violent, grasping creature, and a numerous second family, and some of an earlier marriage of her own; true children of the horse-leech, these. All these were bitterly opposed to me; and the old man himself was afraid of them. So he gave your mother her portion secretly in jewels and specie, and bade us run away together and get married,

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to save him from reproaches on all sides. This we did; and we might have lived a long and happy life together, but for these wretched relatives of hers. They spent all their share of the old man's money; and then they followed us, and tried by every means, whether of law or of robbery—and I class the two together—to deprive us of our justly-acquired fortune. I believe that they cut short the days of your poor mother, who died of a mysterious disease that baffled the skill of the physicians.

"Happily, there is only one of the old lot left—an old villain who bears the name of Papyrus. But there are young ones growing up. Still, I think I have secured George by kindness; but do not trust him too far. So beware of all these, and keep your money out of the reach both of law and of robbery. To make all this easier, I have invested everything in securities, with coupons payable to bearer. Enclosed you will find the name of a man who will buy the coupons; and that is better than getting the money through a bank, as you save Income Tax. Be careful to cut off all coupons due, and coming due within the next three months. There is a pair of scissors in the envelope. Do not come here often, or at regular intervals. Above all, tell nobody. Also I forbid you to pay anything to rogues who pretend I owe them money. Take care of the amulet of Sidi Ben Nouman. It has always brought me good fortune, and may it be equally propitious to you. Now may Allah have you in his keeping" At the foot of this was a rough calculation of the present value of the various securities, by which it seemed that they represented a fortune of about fifty thousand pounds.

Louise hastily examined some of the bundles of papers, fearing that the whole thing was a delusion, and her poor father's wealth merely imaginary. But clearly the bonds were genuine, and of great value, representing almost every description of currency, with Chinese and Japanese figures among the rest. But the girl was too much agitated and excited to examine anything else, or to go through the formidable process of cutting off and disposing of her coupons. She thrust all the papers back, locked up the safe, and found herself in broad daylight again. Louise thought it necessary to explain to the secretary that she had not time to finish her business that day, but would probably come again on the morrow.

"We shall be delighted to see you whenever you like to come," was the official's smiling reply; and Louise jumped into the cab that had been summoned for her with a feeling of relief and triumph, and yet of terrible responsibility.

And Papyrus, that terrible Papyrus, was still in possession. Louise heard his voice the moment she entered the house, as he reiterated, in strangely varied tones, his plaintive enquiry: "Where are my ten shousant pounts?" But Louise was bolder now with the consciousness of her newly-found wealth. She confronted Papyrus with the request that he would walk out of the house, for she would never pay him a farthing. Papyrus regarded her with something like respect.

"What, you—you little sing!" he said. "You was an infant. I shall put you in Chancery in two minutes. Yes, in two minutes, the law have hold of you, and make me your guardian."

Inspired with this new idea, Papyrus put on his hat, and rushed out of the house.

Before long, Colonel Shepstone came in to see how matters were going on. He had made arrangements that Aunt Irene should be received as an in-patient at —— Hospital.

"But she is not going to a hospital," said Louise, firmly. "I am going to have a nurse for her—two nurses, indeed, one to watch by night, and one by day."

"But, Louise!" cried Constantia, turning pale, "I have not agreed to abdicate my functions."

"You are going to live with George," said Louise, calmly. "He has an excellent appointment now, he tells me, and he is able to offer you a home. I am sorry that we cannot keep you after to-night."

Constantia seemed strangely quelled and subdued. She retired in tears, and the Colonel glanced at Louise. He thought she had taken leave of her senses.

"Perhaps it is of no further use my offering you advice just now," said the Colonel, grasping his hat, and making a hasty departure.

But when he had gone, the girl's courage broke down. The burden of things was too heavy for her to bear. Why did not somebody come to help her? Where was the genius of the talisman? Or, more desired still, where was Bertie?

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 39.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV. ON THE MOOR.

THE autumn wind was on the moor; and Elva, who had climbed up from Rushbrook Mills towards the Beacon, sat down on a stile for the pleasure of feeling the air about her, and gazed at the thousand pictures around her, which, full as she was of the poetic spirit, she could enjoy with an enjoyment as intense as it was real. By her ran the grey, sandy road which divided the great belt of firs which stretched itself up hill and down hill for a mile or two from the Beacon. It was a perfect day; the fresh breeze lifted and swayed all that came in its way, from the soft, round, grey shadow-clouds to the tops of the tall fir-trees, and, lower than that, to the delicate, flowering grasses of every description. On the side of the road by which Elva had chosen her stile, there was a sweep of open moorland, where the heather, the ling, and the gorse all struggled for supremacy. But just here none had gained the victory, for all the grasses were in leaf and flower, or in fruit and seed, and exhibited hues, varying from the dull yellow of withered age, to the green and brown, russet and purple of their various kinds. Beyond these, the bracken and the thistle put in their sturdy appearance, whilst the burdock, in flower of richest red and light-green leaf, contrasted well with the purple scabious, on many a head of which a bumble-bee was happily balancing itself, making the flower that gave up its honey bend beneath the weight of the spoiler.

This, and much more, Elva looked on whilst making a vision of her future life, as all young, eager souls do at some time or other.

"Papa will be just a little particular, but, if I coax him, he will think his future son-in-law perfection, I know he will; and Amice will declare he is not good enough; and mamma will think the wedding preparations a great trouble; and I—well, he and I will be above all common ideas of ordinary people. We shall trust each other, and share all our ideas, and he will encourage me to write good novels, or perhaps poetry; and he will love Rushbrook as much as I do. Our wedding will be different from that of ordinary people; we will just go to Saint John's and be married on an early summer morning, when this dear moor will be all over gossamer veils, and Amice will be there as my bridesmaid. Of course, Amice will never marry. I can't fancy any one making love to her. Yet, perhaps, on an autumn day like this, some very saintly person might come——" And then Elva hummed a verse she had read that morning:

> "How should I your true love know
> From another one?
> By his cockle hat and staff
> And his sandle shoon.

Yes, Amice's love will wear a cockle hat and sandle-shoon!"

Something in her own happiness recalled to her the dinner-party at Court Garden, and Hoel Fenner's words:

"No one can write a novel who has not seen life under some of its most painful aspects."

Elva thought of her own untroubled existence, and impatiently crossed her arms.

"No; I suppose I have not suffered;

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but I can love. And I could love with all my heart. When I am married my husband will understand my ideas, and he won't call them 'crude,' like that horrid Mr. Hoel Fenner. How I hate that word, and him for saying it!"

She jumped off the stile, and knelt down on the moor to pick a few wild flowers for Amice. How exquisite was the scent of all these heath treasures; how lovely life and nature were! Earth seemed so fair, so full of possibilities to this girl, that, even as she felt a little hurt that sorrow had not taught her anything, she also rejected it as a dumb creature turns away from poisoned food.

So busy was she, seeking for tiny flowers, that she did not hear the faint sound of footsteps on the sandy road close by, till George Guthrie's voice startled her and made her jump up.

"Why, here is La Belle Dame sans merci! Elva! I thought that at this time of the morning young ladies had avocations indoors."

Elva blushed from anger, for walking with George was her enemy, Hoel Fenner.

"I was gathering wild thyme and flowers Amice likes best. I should have thought that it would have been men who had morning avocations."

She laughed to hide her feeling of annoyance; but George Guthrie was discerning.

"Now, Elva, you are displeased, I see, because you fancy the whole moorland is yours. I was taking Mr. Fenner for a walk up to the top of the Beacon; but, seeing you, we turned aside. Mr. Fenner, judge between Miss Kestell and myself—has she a right to be angry? As to her title, well, that was given some time ago because she is so hard on the race called man, and fancies the masculine gender altogether a poor creature."

Elva could not help laughing, and Hoel was struck with the warm glow of life that characterised Miss Kestell.

"If I am 'La Belle Dame sans merci,' then you are certainly 'the wretched wight,' George."

"So haggard and so woe-begone," quoted Hoel, surprised at this country girl's quickness of rejoinder, for he was fast slipping into the idea that only a Londoner has sharp wit. As he spoke, he scrutinised the "belle dame." After all, candle-light had not improved her beauty. She seemed almost perfect now, with her surroundings of pure nature. Here she fitted in like a jewel, replaced in its original setting. As he noted all this, however, Hoel was angry with himself for being interested in a girl, who, he had been told, would have heaps of money, and he almost wished this loquacious Guthrie had not been so communicative.

He again noted her impetuous nature, which seemed clearly depicted in every outline of her head and neck. If she wanted something, he thought, she would walk through fire for it, and be angry if she were singed in the process. Yes, she was an interesting study, and interesting studies were part of his stock-in-trade.

"When we met, two nights ago," he said, "you were angry with the whole tribe of critics. Have you forgiven them now, or are we still in disgrace?"

"I do not change quickly," said Elva, showing much more displeasure than the occasion required, or so it seemed to Hoel. "I still think that English criticism is done on a wrong system altogether."

"Well done, Elva," said Mr. Guthrie, laughing heartily; "just like you to sweep everything away if not quite to your mind. What a pity women are not yet in Parliament!"

Elva's blush was beautiful just then. Hoel quite forgave the sinner who had called it up.

"How can you say that? You know you despise women. All men do, more or less."

"What a rash statement! Pray name one, my dear Elva."

A quick smile made the girl's face a picture, that fitted in beautifully with the rich colour of the landscape around her, and the chasing lights and shadows of the great moorland.

She turned towards the two men, and said, quite earnestly and simply:

"It is not difficult to name Mr. Hoel Fenner."

If Elva had been coy or shy, or weak or diminutive in mind or body, Hoel would not have been the worse for that clear, steadfast gaze. As it was, he was conscious that the glove she was throwing down with such aggressiveness was a dangerous thing for him to pick up. He knew he should retain the picture of that moor, of that girl, for a long time. However, most men do things they regret afterwards; and, clear-sighted as Hoel Fenner was, he recognised that some of his danger lay in the fact that he accepted the challenge, not because he loved at first sight, which

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he was incapable of doing, but because he was conscious of a mixture of admiration and counter-aggressiveness.

"May I ask if Mr. Hoel Fenner despises women more, or less?" said the accused, looking at his accuser's face.

"More, much more than most men, I should say."

"Pray don't contradict her, Fenner. I assure you, as in the case of more important people, it's dangerous."

"You know I despise people who agree with me from politeness," and Elva broke off the head of a tall grass.

"Then let me avoid that danger, and say I disagree with you," said Hoel, smiling. "I consider that a literary man is only too glad to lose sight of the difference between man and woman when he can."

At this moment George Guthrie saw a young carter coming slowly down the road from the Beacon; and, as he knew every man and woman and child on his cousin's estate and in the village, he could not resist the chance of a talk.

"There's Caleb Joyce, Elva; have it out with the critic whilst I say two words to the lad. I'll be back in a minute, Mr. Fenner," and off he went.

Left alone, the two suddenly seemed to lose the spirit of antagonism which a moment before was so strong; and for a few seconds both gazed out at the scene, which in its way could hardly be surpassed for loveliness. In front of them, looking away from the Beacon, an upland meadow lay spread out, the stillness of it being marred only by the eager crows; and beyond again, far above the tops of the grand fir-trees, stretched the long, high table-land ridge, known as the Forest of Alden, where, at intervals, the almost straight line was broken by solitary clumps of thinly-grown firs, each clump having its local name, and serving as special landmarks to many a lonely village. The very width and breadth of this landscape seemed to elevate the minds of those who could appreciate what they saw; and Hoel Fenner, whose mind had been more formed by books than by nature, partially realised how much it must have influenced a girl like Miss Kestell. It was Elva who spoke first.

"Mr. Guthrie is so very kind-hearted and so odd. He really knows more about the poor people than even our clergyman, Mr. Heaton. It's strange, but he really finds pleasure in talking to them about their rheumatism and their pains and aches."

"And you think men are not given to sympathy?"

"Oh, no; except about their own ailments," and Elva's laugh was infectious. "But, then, Mr. Guthrie is very idle; he never would go in for any profession, and much prefers pottering. Now, if I were a man, I should like a more useful life. I would reform evils and work on a large scale, and not waste time in gossiping with the poor."

"I have never yet settled in my mind what is waste of time. Jesse Vicary, for instance, seems to spend much energy in learning German, and French, and shorthand. I doubt whether he will ever derive much money profit out of all this."

"How curious you should have made friends with our Symee's brother! Papa takes so much interest in them. He saved them from the workhouse when they were tiny children."

"And what is the sister like?"

"Oh! Symee acts as our maid, and is as good as gold, and very gentle; but she is not of a very original turn of mind."

Hoel Fenner was interested in the speaker, and so affected interest in the maid.

"And you would prefer an original maid? It seems to me that her name, at least, is not ordinary."

"Papa does not like it. He tried to change it once; but Jesse Vicary took it so much to heart that my sister declared we must continue to call her Symee. I suppose it was her mother's name; but I never thought about it as being original. I think Amice said the mother was Cornish. She likes poor people nearly as much as George Guthrie. I don't. I never can think what to say to them."

Hoel agreed with her, and admired the frankness of the admission.

"Anyhow, all poor men are not like this Vicary. The little I saw of him impressed me much. I made out a theory that he must have had good antecedents; but you say he was only a poor man's son."

Elva, too, was interested. She forgot the critic in the talker.

"Oh, yes; quite poor people. I believe they lived in a little village on the other side of the Crow's Nest—that's the most distant clump you see out there. Then I think I heard papa say once that the grandmother took a little cottage on the Beacon just before her death."

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"I think Vicary has an interesting psychological history."

"How do you mean?"

"I fancy he believes in Christianity in a way which reminds one of the mediæval mind."

"But doesn't every one believe in Christianity?"

"Yes, as a fact; but few believe it in all its spiritual parts."

Elva almost said, as she looked up at Hoel, "Do you?" But she changed the words to:

"We country people believe in a good, old-fashioned style, I suppose. We never question our belief, or examine it; I suppose if we did we should get puzzled. My sister Amice would not, however; she is very unlike other people; she tries to carry out her religion in a literal sense which my mother thinks very inconvenient. It is tiresome sometimes, but I never question it, because if Amice thinks a thing right, she does it all the more if one opposes her; besides, I think all Amice does is right, though we are so different."

The intense reality of her words fell like pleasant music on the ears of the man who, up to this time, had never had a very intense affection, because he had been so much engaged in polishing the bright diamond called Hoel Fenner.

"You are willing to agree and disagree with your sister; that is a very pleasant relationship."

Elva saw George Guthrie coming back, and she at once felt she had been too communicative with the critic.

"I don't give names to my feelings."

"But you will allow me to admire your loyalty to her?"

"Oh, I don't know; 'there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so.' It's no use analysing; it only results in failure."

Poor Elva was thinking of "An Undine of To-day," little guessing that though her book had appeared uninteresting to Hoel, the living study was most engaging. Here was a country girl who had had no season in town, no special advantages, and yet who could express her thoughts well, and with a dash of originality. He could not help thinking of her future, as we sometimes do with regard to those strangers who come suddenly into our lives, and who may themselves be passing over the threshold into a strange world of events.

"She will marry a money-bag or a spendthrift—that young Akister, perhaps—and her originality will be smothered by a conventional society."

So reasoned the philosopher, as George Guthrie came up full of a new idea.

"I have been hearing of Caleb Joyce's little sister 'Liza. She's in London, and isn't it queer, Elva?—your protégé, Vicary, is there. Caleb says she's a deal of tramping to do, and very little victuals. And he summed up her grievances by saying: 'Why, sir, up there, they be just like a lot of furreners.'"

"Poor people get very queer ideas of life," smiled Hoel.

"I can match them with the rich, I assure you! What do you think happened this morning, my dear Elva? After breakfast, my cousin was reading a heap of little pamphlets about good societies. She keeps a special paper basket full of them, and I sometimes amuse myself with reading their titles. Well, in comes Groves. 'If you please, ma'am, Mrs. Joliff—she's the poultry woman—has sent to ask for some port wine for the chickens that got numbed last night.' My good cousin looks up quite pathetically, for her husband has gone off to the Board. 'Your master has left some port wine with you, Groves, I know. You can send that.' But Groves looked horribly woe-begone. 'Yes, 'm; but that was only the poor people's port wine. I don't know whether that would d-o-o-o.' 'No, perhaps not, Groves. Take a little out of our decanter.' Exit Jones."

The whole tone and the diversified accents of George Guthrie were so comical, that both his hearers laughed heartily, though Elva added:

"Don't tell Amice that story, she takes things so literally. Mrs. Eagle Bennison meant no harm."

"Harm! I should think not. She was quite unconscious of any but the best intentions. Every one knows that bad port won't hurt a poor man, neither will it restore the circulation of a chicken. Comparisons are of course odious; but one has to make them sometimes."

"I must go home," said Elva, suddenly.

During Mr. Guthrie's explanation, Hoel had been picking some beautiful gentians near by, which his quick eye had suddenly discovered. He came back and handed them to Elva.

"Will you accept these, Miss Kestell? To my town eyes they look beautiful and rare."

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Elva took them with a cold "Thank you," and the sudden gravity, almost frown, on her bright face was evident.

Hoel was puzzled by the sudden change, and, as he and Mr. Guthrie walked on up the moor, he felt half nettled and half sorry he had given the flowers. Some instinct made him glance back, unseen by George Guthrie, who was leading the way, and to his mortification he saw Elva Kestell fling his gentians away with a determined, impetuous action which clearly expressed dislike of the giver. True, she did not know she was seen; indeed, there was no doubt the action was the result of some quick thought, but Hoel felt a glow of hurt pride at the very idea of being disliked. He had fancied he had made an impression on Elva, as he was accustomed to do on women in general. She had certainly interested him, or something more. Even now he would have liked to have asked her why she disliked him. In all natures with a vein of vanity in them, there is a painful shrinking back from being disliked without sufficient reason; and, strange inconsistency of human nature, it was Elva's action, her contempt of his gift, and therefore of himself, which resulted in the birth of the idea: "She cannot understand me; but she shall some day like me." To himself Hoel said no more; but there is an inner consciousness deeper than that represented by thought, the expression of which is like a picture formed by misty clouds; and from this mist Hoel saw unfolded the thought, "She shall love me!"

A VOICE FROM ST. HELENA.

The "voice" first sounded in the year 1822, the speaker being an Irish army doctor, Barry O'Meara, who thus explains his conduct:

"Placed by circumstances, arising from my profession, near the person of the most extraordinary man, perhaps, of any age, in the most critical period of his life, I determined to profit by my opportunities as far as I could consistently with honour."

How far that might be was a point on which the doctor and the British Government thought very differently. O'Meara was accused of betraying State secrets; and Sir Hudson Lowe began an action for defamation, but allowed it to lapse, though he had retained Lord Lyndhurst as his counsel. Of course, O'Meara's career was ruined. "Blackwood" and "The Quarterly," that is, "Christopher North" and John Wilson Croker, Admiralty Secretary, naturally fell on him tooth and nail; and as naturally "The Edinburgh" defended him, quoting Las Casas, who says:

"All that he writes of the time that I was in St. Helena is strictly true. He was a stranger to us, and in some degree one of the adverse party."

Carlyle, too, testifies: "O'Meara's work has increased my respect for Napoleon. Since the days of Prometheus Bound I recollect no spectacle so moving and sublime. I declare I could almost love the man."

Born in 1778, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and at the Dublin and London Colleges of Surgeons, O'Meara became an assistant-surgeon in the Sixty-second Regiment. He lost this post, after serving in Egypt and in Italy, because he was second in a duel; but managed to slip into an assistant navy-surgeonship. He was in the "Bellerophon" in 1815, and, as he could speak Italian and was professionally clever, Napoleon asked Lord Keith to let him go with the party to St. Helena. Lord Keith said "Yes," and O'Meara accepted the post, and, though it was every way to his interest to have sided with Lowe, he soon came under the spell of a mind which even enemies like Metternich and Madame de Remusat confess to have been strangely fascinating.

Croker thought that he had pinned O'Meara on the charge on which the Admiralty dismissed him—accusing Lowe of wishing him to poison Napoleon. But Croker forgot that O'Meara was in this dilemma: he could only report through Lowe. Had he written directly to Government, his letter would have been sent to Lowe for him, as Governor of the island, to act upon against the writer. O'Meara claimed to be tried in England by court-martial; instead of this, he was summarily dismissed. That some official people did long for the ex-Emperor's death is plain from Croker's own letter to Peel, in 1816: "George Cockburn gives us no hope of Bonaparte's dying."

No doubt Lowe had a hard task. Napoleon had always been, of all men, the most untrammelled by routine, and fond of having a finger in everything. To keep such a man caged in almost utter idleness—an idleness that bred envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness—in a climate

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where the livers of men used to an active life are sure to get hopelessly out of order, would have needed superhuman tact; and, perhaps, there never was a man more wholly devoid of tact than Sir Hudson Lowe.

He had already come across the Bonaparte family, having been quartered at Ajaccio, during our occupation of the island of Corsica in 1792, when he was employed in that most unsatisfactory of all tasks — forming a corps of renegades, whom our Government christened "Royal Corsican Rangers."

This brought him into connection with scoundrels and double spies, doubtless not to his moral good. In 1807 he had to surrender Capri to General Lamarque. On this affair Napoleon used to remark: "Sir Lowe shows himself a better gaoler than a general."

Napier, in his "Peninsular War," is much more severe. "Sir Hudson," he says, "first became known to history by losing, in a few days, a post that, without any pretensions to celebrity, might have been defended for as many years."

His thorough knowledge of Italian may have led to his being set over Napoleon. He certainly had no other qualification. His official instructions were "to allow General Bonaparte every indulgence compatible with the entire security of his person, and with his not communicating with any one except through you." What were the private orders to which he was constantly referring, and which he told everybody would justify his going much farther than he did in the way of restraint, no one knows. Possibly they may some day be unearthed at the War Office. It is strange that—as his partisan, Mr. Forsyth, admits—"he wearied the Government with applications for redress against O'Meara, when he had in his own hands the amplest means of vindicating his character." There must have been something in the background.

The appointment of such a man must have been a let down for Napoleon. On board the "Bellerophon" he had been treated as a fallen Emperor. The officers all took off their hats to him. They let him play at soldiers with the marines, whom, for fun, he taught the French bayonet practice. Admiral Cockburn, who acted as Governor from October, 1815, till the arrival of Lowe the following April, had taken all necessary precautions; but he had not insisted on always speaking and writing to and of his captive as General Bonaparte; and he had not condescended to the meanness with which Lowe began his reign, of sending his secretary and aide-de-camp to warn the shopkeepers not to give any of the French a farthing's credit on pain of all sorts of penalties. This money question came up continually. Napoleon's allowance was nominally large, twelve thousand pounds a year, as much as the Governor himself received in pay and allowances; and Lowe was always trying to force it down to eight thousand pounds. The Emperor's suite was large. Lowe sent away several of them. But he could not, or dared not, go to the root of the evil, the monstrous charges made by the commissariat agents, who made fortunes by charging from twelve to fifteen shillings for a skinny fowl, and six shillings a pound for maccaroni. The consequence was that Napoleon was always sending his plate to be sold; at one time nearly five hundred pounds' worth of it. Another quarrel was that the money was not allowed to come to him, but was lodged with Mr. Balcombe, the purveyor, in whose pretty house, the Briars, Napoleon stayed while bleak, unhealthy Longwood was being altered to receive him, and whose pretty daughter boxed little Count Las Casas's ears when he tried to steal a kiss. Napoleon always had the plate broken up, and the cypher cut out. This angered Lowe, who pointed out that it would sell much better with the evidence of its origin on it. The food was poor; the meat sometimes so bad that even Captain Poppleton, who had to inspect it, was obliged to send it back. Mutton was charged two shillings a pound; pork fifteen pence; cabbages from a shilling to half-a-crown each; eggs five to six shillings a dozen. The water was execrable and very scarce, often tasting of the barrels in which it was rolled up to Longwood. Napoleon spent a good deal of time in his bath; and when he complained of the scanty supply, Sir Hudson grumbled at his wasting so much stewing in his tub while the garrison was not over well supplied. Once the Longwood party had colic. They thought the cause was some wine that had newly come in; and Cipriani, the cook, was sent to borrow a dozen more of the claret they had been buying from the Fifty-third's mess. The Governor was furious; and his secretary, Major Gorrequer, said plainly:

"If he won't drink what he's got, he ought not to be allowed any other."

The colic was real; but the wine was

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not in fault. Count Montholon found that the copper saucepans wanted tinning; and after the usual fuss a new set was sent up. Sir T. Reade was worse than Lowe. When Sir T. Strange, an Indian Judge, wanted to pay his respects, Napoleon refused to receive him unless he came through Bertrand, adding:

"Those who come direct from the Governor I will not see. I should seem to be obeying his orders if I did."

Reade urged Lowe to insist on Strange being admitted.

"If I were Governor," he said, with oaths which it is not necessary to repeat, "I'd make him feel he was a prisoner."

Somebody said:

"Why, you couldn't do much more than has been done, unless you were to put him in irons."

"Oh, yes," answered Reade. "If he didn't do as I wished I'd take his books from him. That's what I advise the Governor to do. He's an outlaw and a prisoner, and the Governor has a right to treat him as severely as he likes, and nobody has any business to interfere."

Books were the ex-Emperor's one solace. He often slept badly, and O'Meara used to find him in the morning in his bedroom, the floor heaped with what he had thrown down after reading.

"Ah, what a pleasure I've had," he would say, smiling, after a fresh case of books had come in. He read with a purpose, writing every day a little of his "Memoirs and History." In this Las Casas, who knew English, was invaluable; for the Egyptian campaign especially, Napoleon had to study English books and newspapers. This made him bitterly feel, and deeply resent Las Casas's banishment. Not only was his work brought to a standstill, but there was nobody to read him an English newspaper. He grumbled, naturally enough, because none were sent except Tory papers. It was certainly mean to make him pay for them; but small economies and senseless waste went hand in hand at St. Helena. More money was spent on Longwood than would have made the whole party comfortable at the Briars for thrice as long as Napoleon lived. One great grievance was that the Longwood party were locked inside the garden at six p.m., the cool of the evening being the only enjoyable time for a walk. Even in the daytime it was not pleasant to run the gauntlet of the sentries posted all round the valley. Once a drunken corporal came rushing up, and levelled his piece at Napoleon. General Gourgaud was just able to collar him and drag him towards the nearest post. The prisoner would not believe but that the sentry had been ordered to insult him.

Horse exercise, essential to health for one of Napoleon's temperament, was well-nigh put a stop to by the regulation that an English officer must always be of the party. The captive shrank from having his position forced on him in this way. Bertrand suggested: "Let some one always ride and meet the party. I'll undertake that word is always sent in time before we start." But Lowe was obdurate, and, in consequence, for days Napoleon wouldn't stir out, till he got quite ill, and only yielded to O'Meara's pressing assurance that want of exercise would kill him. The offensive precaution was quite needless. Besides the cordons of sentinels, every possible landing-place was watched, and war-ships kept sailing round the island; so that any idea of escape to America was utterly absurd.

The ceremonies when the daily provisions were brought in were ridiculous in the extreme. Having been searched for letters, they were handed over the wall in solemn silence, the sentry having strict orders not to allow a word to be said on either side. Once O'Meara sent up for one of Bertrand's servants a medicine bottle, with a label of directions. This was in French, and the sentry tore it off, though the man was known to be dangerously ill. It would not do to be soft-hearted; one sentry allowed a commissariat black, who said he was dying of thirst, to go into Bertrand's courtyard and get some water. He was tried by court-martial. It was no use appealing to the Governor; his reply always was: "If it was merely a question of safely keeping Bonaparte in the island, an East India Company's Governor would have answered every purpose. I have higher instructions. I was sent out to fulfil other objects. Tell him it is very fortunate for him he has a good man over him. Others, on the instructions I have, would put him in irons for his behaviour." Napoleon always suspected Lord Bathurst, the War-Secretary, of being at the bottom of his ill-treatment, his cousin, Benjamin Bathurst, having mysteriously disappeared in 1809, murdered, the English papers asserted, by Napoleon's orders. There is no doubt Lord Bathurst believed the Emperor to be guilty; and the belief must have

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influenced him even against his better feeling.

Napoleon, unscrupulous as he may have been, was not likely to commit a purposeless crime. He often showed himself remarkably humane. One of his great battles with Lowe was fought over some superb Chinese ivory carvings—two work-baskets, a set of chessmen, etc. — sent to him by the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone out of gratitude for saving his brother's life. The day before Waterloo Captain Elphinstone was badly wounded, and made prisoner. Napoleon happened to see him, noticed that he was bleeding to death, at once sent his surgeon to him, and, filling a silver cup with wine from his own flask, gave it him to drink. This accounts for the considerate courtesy with which Admiral Lord Keith, Elphinstone's uncle, treated Napoleon after he had surrendered. The Governor, instead of sending up at once Mr. Elphinstone's gifts and the letter that came with them, kept them back, and would have suppressed them altogether, had not Bertrand heard of their arrival; and all because a crowned N was engraved on each of them. For the same reason he wholly refused to pass Mr. Hobhouse's book, because the author had stamped on the cover, "To the Emperor Napoleon."

Two men cannot get on together when one complains:

"I've been up two or three times to see you, but you were always in your bath." And the other replies: "No, sir, I was not in a bath; but I ordered one on purpose not to see you. You only make things worse."

And worse they did become; for, after that "retort courteous," the Governor, who had come on Napoleon unawares in the garden, turned away without saying good-bye, exclaiming: "I pity a man whose manners are so rude."

Sometimes Lowe would threaten Madame Bertrand, biting his nails, and saying: "If she doesn't take care, I'll make her situation, and her husband's, too, far more unpleasant than it is." Then he would turn on the ex-Emperor, and tell O'Meara to inform him that "He's a prisoner of war, and I've a right to treat him according to his conduct. I'll build him up." He was digging deep ditches all round the Longwood demesne. "I consider Ali Pasha much the more respectable scoundrel of the two."

Perhaps the cruellest thing Lowe did was to keep for a fortnight a bust of Napoleon's son, sent out to him by the ex-Empress Louise. He doubted if he was authorised to deliver it at all. He said it was a poor, worthless piece of work, not at all worth the hundred guineas that would have to be paid for Custom House and other expenses. A Captain Lamb started a report that Reade and Lowe had advised him to throw the bust overboard. Let us hope, for the honour of human nature, that he was joking. Mixed with all these petty squabbles, each pettier than the other, are most interesting details about the Emperor's doings in war and peace. He had an intense contempt for most of the crowned heads of Europe; described to O'Meara, with an Italian's enjoyment of the joke, how at Tilsit he used to burst with laughter at hearing Czar Alexander and the King of Prussia spend hours discussing and contriving hussar dresses, and debating how many rows of buttons there ought to be on a dragoon's jacket.

O'Meara asked how he got so popular with his men.

"Why, after a victory," said he, "I used to ask each regiment, 'Allons, mes enfants; qui sont les braves?' And to those whose names were given me, I gave commissions if they could read and write. If not, I set them to learn, making them spend five hours a day at it, and promoted them as soon as they were competent."

Once O'Meara asked him why he gave his Marshals such outlandish titles: Duke of Montebello, and such like.

"Suppose I had made a Duke of Burgundy," he replied, "all France would have thought I meant to begin the ancient régime—to quarter the old noblesse upon her again."

He really did mean invading England. By false intelligence he would have drawn off our fleets, thus gaining command of the Channel for two months. He would have headed the expedition himself, landed at Chatham, proclaimed a Republic, abolished the House of Lords, and shot any of his soldiers who committed the least outrage. The English would not have burnt London as the Russians did Moscow. Moreover, "I should have won your fleets, when they returned, by abolishing flogging."

Madame de Staël's hatred of him he explained as due not to his tyranny, but to her vanity. Once, while they were still good friends, she asked:

"Who is the greatest woman in Europe?"

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"She who has borne the greatest number of healthy children," he replied; and the disappointed authoress never forgave him.

Governor Lowe had a very nasty way of putting things.

"I believe his not taking exercise is because he is too lazy," he would say; and when the Emperor complained of the "ventaccio," and other discomforts of Longwood, he would say: "Yes, he wants to get Plantation House; but the E. I. C. won't be such fools as to give that up to be ruined by a set of Frenchmen."

The "set of Frenchmen" certainly beautified Longwood. After long waiting to have his garden put in order, Napoleon took it in hand himself, made his whole suite work, hired some Chinese, and soon had the finest flowers on the island. Here it was that the Balcombes came in for a wigging from the Governor. They had gone up to look over the grounds, when one of the daughters, with whom, while at the Briars, Napoleon had often played blind-man's buff, caught sight of him in the billiard-room, and, despite her father's remonstrances, challenged him to a game. They were reported, and got a stern rebuke for daring to communicate with General Bonaparte, when their permits only allowed them to have speech with Count Bertrand. This Miss Balcombe he used to joke with about the drinking powers with which he credited our nation.

"Your father drank five bottles, mees. And you, too, sometimes laike veree mosh drink. Yes, brandee, geen. You like drink, Mees Betsee."

Poor fellow! he had few jokes, and was often driven to playfully pull O'Meara's ear, or Bertrand's, by way of emphasizing a remark. One is glad to think that the story so often told about the English sailors who, having escaped from prison, had gone to sea in something little better than a hen-coop, and whom he sent safely across, is substantially true. He told it to O'Meara while discussing with him the history of his Boulogne armament. These talks so vexed Sir Hudson that at last he insisted on their being stopped.

"You have no right to speak to him except professionally."

"I consider it a professional duty to amuse my patient."

And so O'Meara had to resign, and Napoleon gave him a grand snuff-box, and said:

"When the Pope was my prisoner, I would not for all Europe have deprived him of his physician. Go to my brother Joseph, and get from him the letters sent me by the allied Emperors. Publish them, and let the world see how the men who afterwards persecuted me crawled at my feet in the day of my power."

The letters were never found. Joseph, before he sailed for America, fearing he might be captured by an English ship, gave them into what he deemed safe hands. His "friend" took them to London, and the Russian Ambassador bought them up —giving thirty thousand pounds for those of his master. O'Meara was sent off in July, 1818. The Balcombes had gone four months before, the plea being Mrs. Balcombe's health, the real cause the suspicious hostility of the Governor, and the perpetual panic about secret correspondence. For five months Napoleon remained without a doctor, obstinately refusing to see the one appointed by the Governor. At last a Corsican, Professor Antomacchi, was sent out by Cardinal Fesch at the request of our Government. Him Napoleon received with one of the practical jokes of which he was as fond as Cromwell. Having been introduced to his patient in bed in a darkened room, the Professor went away, and ten minutes after was summoned again to find him fully dressed in the drawing-room. He took him by the ears, crying:

"You thought I had lost all my strength in this abominable climate. No; you see I have not."

It was three years before the end came. For those three years we have no "Voice." Antomacchi tells little; but things seem to have got on somewhat better. New Longwood was finished at last, and was more comfortable than the old place; and the new doctor not talking English, the Governor could not suspect him of trying to send messages to Europe in merchant ships.

OLD DAYS AT THE HAYMARKET

THE "little theatre," as it was once familiarly styled, has always been an especial favourite with London playgoers; and, when under the management of Benjamin Webster and his successor, John Baldwin Buckstone, was generally regarded as the legitimate home of modern comedy. It is greatly to be regretted, by the way,

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that neither of these excellent actors—both admirably qualified for the task—has left any published record of his professional career; although, in the case of the latter of the two, it is clear that such a design was seriously contemplated. As far as I have been able to ascertain, a manuscript containing his own autobiographical notes was entrusted by Buckstone to the late Walter Thornbury, who had undertaken to arrange and prepare them for publication. Shortly after, Thornbury died, and the manuscript was probably mislaid or lost, for nothing, to my knowledge at least, has since been heard of it.

My first visit to the Haymarket dates from an epoch before my school days, during the (then) unprecedented run of "Paul Pry," the original cast of which included four of the most popular theatrical notabilities of the time—namely, Liston, W. Farren, Mrs. Glover, and Madame Vestris, besides Pope, as Witherton, and the charming Mrs. Waylett in the small part of Frank Hardy. Even at that early age, the impression produced on me by the drolleries of the inquisitive meddler, and, above all, by the fascinating Phœbe and her delicious "Cherry Ripe," was destined to outlive the evening's entertainment; for I perfectly remember that on the following afternoon I, with some difficulty, induced my female mentor, a gaunt damsel of—to put it mildly—uncertain temper, to accompany me to the Haymarket, where, unversed in the mystery of stage-doors, I boldly posted myself at the principal entrance, fondly imagining that Miss Hardy's bewitching handmaid would inevitably appear — whether in her stage dress, or in the ordinary apparel of every-day life, I was not quite clear—which she naturally never did. This, however, has nothing to do either with Webster or Buckstone; the manager at that period having been a certain David Morris, "a great character," Planché tells us in his "Recollections" — "a rather consequential and perfectly self-satisfied little old gentleman," but a terrible martinet.

On returning to the Haymarket some years later, I found Farren and Mrs. Glover still to the fore as Mr. and Mrs. Coddle in Buckstone's "Married Life," seconded by the author himself and other able members of the company, some of whom I shall have occasion to allude to hereafter. From the very beginning of his professional career, with a confidence in his own powers amply justified by the result, Farren had adopted a particular line of characters in which he was gradually recognised as "facile princeps," without a single competitor worthy of the name. Old men of every description, from Lord Ogleby to Lovegold, from Sir Peter Teazle to Grandfather Whitehead, were successively personated by him with an exquisite perfection of detail which no actor within my experience has surpassed, and which, even in the most trifling parts, was never for an instant lost sight of. In the character of Michel Perrin, in "Secret Service," originally "created" by Bouffé, and subsequently sustained by Farren, it was difficult to assign the superiority to either; both were finished comedians, alike admirable in expressing simplicity and pathos, yet "each so individual—the one as thoroughly English as the other was French," says Lewes in his "Actors and the Art of Acting," "that it puzzled criticism to award the palm." In other respects, there existed no point of comparison between them, Bouffé's line of parts being as extensive as his talented contemporary's was limited, and ranging from youth to old age—from the "Gamin de Paris" to "Grand Papa Guérin."

What can I say of Mrs. Glover, beyond heartily endorsing the verdict of every playgoer of her time, that she was as near perfection as the most fastidious critic could possibly desire? No piece, not even the dreary five-act comedies which at the period in question followed one another at the Haymarket with distressing regularity, hung heavy when she was on the stage; her vivacity and irresistible geniality carried all before them, and people forgot or condoned the long-winded platitudes of the author in their admiration of his interpreter. Limited as her range of characters was, like that of Farren, her natural versatility enabled her to give to each of them its distinctive feature, merging her own individuality in that of the personage represented by her, or, as the French actor Bignon picturesquely expressed it, "entrant carrément dans la peau du bonhomme." Her voice was clear, resonant, and melodious, and her delivery irreproachable; she possessed, moreover, the rare quality of appearing unconscious that she was in the presence of an audience, so that, as has been truly observed, "a special air of spontaneity distinguished her manner upon the stage." I have before me a letter from my old

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friend Regnier, of the Comédie Française, written during one of his professional visits to London about forty years ago, in which, after alluding to the pleasure he had derived from the acting of Farren, James Wallack, and Webster, he says: "What struck me most, however, in your theatres was the talent of Mrs. Glover. With all my partiality for our excellent Madame Desmousseaux" — the clever duenna of the "Maison de Molière"—"I must confess that the great artist of the Haymarket is immeasurably her superior." This is the more flattering, inasmuch as Regnier's opinion of Mrs. Glover was based solely on her performance of a comparatively trifling character. What would he have said had he seen her Mrs. Candour!

From some cause or other I saw Webster less frequently at the Haymarket than I could have wished, although I had often occasion to appreciate his very remarkable dramatic qualities elsewhere. I have, however, a vivid recollection of him as Tartuffe in Oxenford's admirable version, where, to my mind, the English actor was almost equal to Bocage, and far superior to Bressant; as Nephew Hawk in "Uncle John;" and as Croaker in the "Miseries of Human Life," a part originally played by Bardou at the Vaudeville, and fully as mirth-provoking in its translated form.

Whether, notwithstanding his sterling and versatile talent, Webster was as popular as he deserved to be, is a debateable question; whereas, in the case of Buckstone, no such doubt is for an instant admissible. Who can forget that quaint little humorist, whose name has been so long a household word with us, endeared to our memories by pleasant recollections of nearly half a century? A favourite alike with old and young, he was in the strictest sense of the term original: his mannerisms, his droll inflexions of voice, and his indescribable costumes — I have seen him, I think, in "Lend Me Five Shillings," attired for a ball in a plum-coloured tail coat and white trousers, much too short for him—were all entirely and exclusively his own. Doyle has immortalised him in "Ye House amused by ye Comick Actor," and no better illustration of the influence exercised by him over the risible muscles of an audience could be wished for than this clever drawing, which represents Buckstone standing near the footlights, and indulging in his wonted facial contortions, while the occupants of boxes, pit, and gallery (including two exquisites in a stage box) are convulsed with merriment, and even the generally impassive leader of the orchestra benignantly condescends to smile.

Two worthy representatives of elderly gentlemen, Strickland and Tilbury, the former incomparably the better of the two, were for a long time members of the Haymarket company; as was also Howe, always conscientious and painstaking, and sometimes excellent, notably as the King in "Don Cæsar de Bazan." By the way, I may mention that, precisely forty years ago, this estimable comedian, having been asked by a collector for his autograph, neatly replied, in the words of the Spanish monarch:

Proceed, sir, your audacity somewhat pleases us.

If "London Assurance" had never been written, Brindal would probably have continued to vegetate in the undisturbed possession of a certain line of unimportant parts, which, it must be owned, he played very indifferently. "There is," however, "a tide in the affairs of man, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;" and Brindal's turn came at last. After a long sojourn at the Haymarket, he obtained an engagement at Covent Garden, where, either by some lucky chance, or thanks to the preternatural acuteness of the author, the part of Cool in the newly-accepted comedy was assigned him. Nothing, as it happened, could have suited him better. His imperturbable stolidity, which hitherto had been a stumbling-block in his way, became a positive quality; and what was merely the result of habit on his part, was hailed by the press and public as an unexpected revelation. Unfortunately, as in the case of Single-speech Hamilton, his Alpha was also his Omega. When the run of the piece was over, he at once subsided into his accustomed mediocrity, and descended the ladder of celebrity even more rapidly than he had mounted it.

Whenever the cast of a piece included two "old ladies," Mrs. Glover, as a matter of course, had first choice; the other falling to the lot either of Mrs. W. Clifford, or of Mrs. Tayleure, both actresses of more than ordinary merit. Mrs. Clifford, who still retained some traces of good looks, excelled in the speciality of scheming widows, such as Mrs. Wiley in "Rural Felicity;" whereas cross-grained spinsters and depressing females, like Mrs. Dismal in "Married Life," were, to all appearance—

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for I never saw her play anything else—exclusively reserved for poor Mrs. Tayleure.

I have a very pleasant recollection of "pretty, merry Taylor," as she was familiarly called, especially in the "Maid of Croissey," adapted from the French by Mrs. Gore, and in the "Artist's Wife," also an importation from across the Channel, in which a clever amateur, under the assumed name of Ranger, scored a great and deserved success. This charming actress, the original Helen in the "Hunchback," was for several seasons the "leading lady" at the Haymarket; and, in a revival of the "School for Scandal" at that theatre in 1839, after her marriage with Mr. Walter Lacy, played Lady Teazle with delightful archness and vivacity. Some years later I saw her at Brighton as Kate O'Brien in "Perfection," and am bound to confess that her beauty, grace, and winning fascination of manner considerably disturbed my allegiance to Madame Vestris, and threw Mrs. Waylett completely into the shade.

On Mrs. Walter Lacy's secession from the company, her place was filled by Miss Fortescue, a strikingly handsome brunette, who had already more than redeemed the promise of future excellence held out by her at the outset of her career. Impulsive and energetic, she was always in earnest, and consequently always real. Whatever might be the part undertaken by her, serious or comic, she threw her whole soul into it, and out of the vaguest and flimsiest sketch, produced a finished and harmonious picture. Her Helen in "The School for Scheming" was a performance alike admirable in conception and execution; and if the play failed to attract, it was probably Mr. Boucicault's fault, and certainly not hers. Her stay at this theatre was short, but sufficiently long to secure for her the esteem and goodwill of every one connected with it; and when she soon after retired from the stage, and became Lady Gardner, the habitués, like the forsaken Calypso, were—or professed to be—inconsolable.

Miss Julia Bennett was an established favourite at the Haymarket; and undeniably a pretty girl, although perhaps a little too conscious of the fact. Her style of acting, however, was too flippant for my taste, and, in the long run, disagreeably irritating; and I much preferred the ladylike refinement of tone and manner of her, to say the least, equally attractive colleague, Miss Jane Reynolds.

My list is nearly ended, but a trump-card still remains to be played. No comedy is complete without a soubrette; and where could one be found more exactly fitted to the part than saucy, ready-witted Mrs. Humby? I have been told that once, in a moment of misplaced ambition, she exchanged the pertness of Lucy for the airs and graces of Lydia Languish, and failed signally; but I repudiate the accusation as it deserves. Her image is indelibly fixed in my memory as that of the smartly-capped, coquettishly-aproned waiting-maid, and I utterly decline to recognise her in any other capacity.

DAHLIAS.

It seemed to me when autumn came,
And lit with tints of red and flame
    The landscape far and near,
And touched with russet, wood and glade,
And brought the heather back, she made
    The glory of the year!

Sweet summer lay so close behind,
Her fragrance lingered on the wind
    That played among the sheaves;
The acorns dropped, the nuts were brown,
And purple blackberries fell down
    Among the yellowing leaves.

It seemed so fair, so full a time,
For hearts in tune with Nature's chime,
    Love-rested hearts like ours;
We sat together in the sun,
Our autumn play-time nearly done,
    Among the old-world flowers.

And soft you said, your hand in mine,
"See now this dahlia, red as wine,
    And shapely as the rose:
It minds us that the rose is gone,
It minds us winter comes anon.
    Dear, dost thou dread its snows?

Dear, dost thou fear to walk with me
A slippery pathway, that must be
    Set far from restful bowers?
I have no roses, love, they died
Before I saw my bonny bride;
    I have but autumn flowers:

But flowers that tell of shortening days,
Of dropping leaves and twilight ways,
    Of wintry nights and chill;
But lo! they whisper, too, of love,
Of home, where like a brooding dove,
    Peace blesseth from all ill.

Dost fear to take my dahlia, dear,
With all its meanings? Answer clear
    With those brave eyes of thine!"
And then you stroked my drooping head,
And I looked up at you, and said,
    "Be mine the dahlia, mine!

How should I fear the winter storm,
With love like thine to wrap me warm?
    My heart, thou dost but jest!
Dearer the dahlia than the rose,
Dearer than spring is summer's close,
    For we have found our nest!"

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MILFORD HAVEN AND PEMBROKE DOCK.

LEAVING Plymouth for a cruise along the western coast, whether bound for the estuary of the Mersey, thronged with ships, or for the great tideway of the Clyde, crowded with pleasure-craft, and huge ocean-going steamers—the rugged coast of Cornwall stretches before us.

Sea-girt it lies where giants dwelt of old.

At night, if there is anything of a swell on the sea, we may hear the voices of the giants as the waves break among the silvery coves, and dash among the cavernous rocks. With rough weather, and a gale from the south-west, the whole coast is fringed with an angry surf that promises "a watery grave by day or night" to the shipwrecked mariner. When the bluff headlands, which mark the entrance to the noble estuary of Falmouth, are once passed, the rush of angry seas from the mighty Atlantic is at its height. The Lizard throws a bright beam of light over the tumult of the waves, and the long, dark outline of the Land's End, that Cape of storms, is revealed by the fringe of surf that beats against it. The black, jagged teeth of the Longship rocks are almost hidden from view in a veil of spray and foam, and the waves dash fiercely to the very summit of the tall lighthouse that warns us away from the fatal spot. And when we have rounded the point, the prospect in the grey dawn of an angry sky is not inviting. With such a wind behind us, the whole coast of the Bristol Channel becomes a treacherous lee shore. Where the rocks break away, more deadly shoals and sands succeed, and the long, bleak coast-line of Wales shuts us in, with St. David's Head looming out seawards, as if to head back the struggling ship.

Yet in the midst of danger there opens out a broad and secure haven, with a great opening two miles wide, in the bleak and shaggy coast of Pembroke. Riding in upon the fierce Atlantic swell, which rolls into the haven mouth that opens fair to the southward, the seaman finds a noble inlet running almost due east, with reaches upon reaches of sheltered waters, where fleets may anchor securely almost out of sight of each other. It is Milford Haven that is placed thus providentially as a harbour of refuge on a stormy, rock-bound coast. Perhaps there is no other haven in the world which enjoys quite the same natural advantages. It seems adapted for a grand commercial port, a meeting-place in the great highway of nations. But the tide of affairs sets in a different direction, and all its fair promises have hitherto failed a little in the performance.

That Milford was early the resort of our more or less piratical ancestors from the Baltic, there is plenty of evidence in the names of places to show. Rugged little islets bear strange, rugged Norse and Danish names, Skomer, and Stockham, and the like; the Angles probably had a nook and a bay to themselves, which still bear their name; and other races have left their mark here and there in the strangely-mixed nomenclature of these regions. Milford, indeed, has nothing to do with the ford by the mill, but is Milfiord, of good Norse ancestry, the added Haven being thus a little superfluous. For it is the whole vast inlet that is Milford, the town itself, which has assumed the name, being of modern origin. The Welsh themselves called the haven Abergleddan, or the estuary of the two Clydes; and the twin rivers which form it still retain their Celtic names. Everywhere else in the neighbourhood the tongue of the stranger has prevailed. For about Milford we have that little England beyond Wales, which still retains its English-speaking population.

Originally the district was called Rhos, or the promontory, and, according to their chronicles, the Welsh were driven out of it to make room for a colony of Flemings. These Flemings were driven from their own country by disastrous inroads of the sea, and after sojourning awhile in England, where they were as little welcome as possible, they were allowed by King Henry the First to settle in Wales, which at that time was too much occupied with domestic broils to resist them. Yet the Flemings probably found an English-speaking people settled about the shore of the Haven, which had been resorted to by sea-rovers from time immemorial.

The old chroniclers, which Shakespeare followed, make Milford Haven a resort of both Britons and Romans:

The Ambassador,
Lucius the Roman, comes to Milford Haven.

Still it is represented as a solitary place, for there the murder of poor Imogen is to be accomplished, and somewhere in the neighbourhood is the cave of Belarius, where she found those long-lost brothers of hers.

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In serious history we only hear of Milford in connection with the Earldom of Pembroke—an earldom which owed its importance to the rich lands that lay about the estuary, and to the numerous men-at-arms who could be mustered among the Englishry who dwelt in the district. Hence the Earl is always an important figure, whether in Stephen's wars or in the wars of the Roses. When the Tudors, from simple Welsh squires, became, by a brilliant marriage, kinsmen to the Royal families of France and England, a Tudor was made Earl of Pembroke, and in Pembroke Castle was born the son of Edmund Tudor, Pembroke's elder brother, afterwards Earl of Richmond and King of England as Henry the Seventh. Thus the Royal line was cradled on the shores of Milford Haven. From Milford Henry escaped with his uncle after the fatal battle of Tewkesbury, when they took refuge in Brittany, and Milford received him again when he came to snatch the crown from the brows of the last of the Plantagenets.

> The Earl of Richmond
> Is with a mighty power landed at Milford,

repeats Catesby to his master, Richard the Third, in Shakespeare's play, and presently we hear of the men of note who have joined him, Herbert, Pembroke, Blunt,

> And Rice ap Thomas with a valiant crew.

It was Rhys, indeed, his kinsman, who was the secret agent of Henry. His seat was Carew Castle, still a noble ruin, most of the buildings of which he erected. He was famous for his wealth and hospitality, and the large following he commanded formed the strongest part of Henry's forces as they set forth on their long march which ended so victoriously on Bosworth Field. Yet Rhys was no courtier, and his services to the Tudors met with little recompense, and not long after the death of old Rhys, his grandson suffered attainder, and the fine estates of the family were granted to favourites of the Court.

There are many beauties about Milford Haven. From the bold headlands which guard the entrance grand views may be obtained of sea and coast, and of the great Haven, with its varied, indented shores; and the upper reaches have a quiet, placid charm when seen under the auspices of fine weather, halcyon skies, and a calm flood tide. Many old castles, too, and picturesque seats are to be found about its shores—not easy of access, indeed, except by boat, for a network of creeks, here called Pills, and minor streams intersect the surface of the county—the Haven being likened by old George Owen to a great crooked and forked tree, with branches great and little. But the navigation of the Haven is safe and easy, free from sudden gusts, and clear for the most part of rocks and shoals. As the old distich has it:

> Dangers in Milford there are none,
> Save the Crowe, and the Carre, and the Castle Stone.

Pembroke may be visited, lying at the head of a great tidal basin, a dull little town in itself, but with the ruins of a noble castle in a fine position at the head of a bold ridge. Here is a fine circular keep, with a massive gateway, and remains of a hall and chapel, and a gloomy subterranean cavern, called the Woyan, suggesting all kinds of romantic horrors. Pembroke stood a siege in the civil wars—Cromwell himself sat down before it, lodging at Welstown House, where an ancient quilted counterpane was long shown stained with ink, which Cromwell, tormented with gout, threw over it in a passion. When the Castle and town were taken, the three leaders of the defence were condemned to death by court-martial. But the three drew lots for life or death, and only one was shot. Then there is Carew, higher up the Haven, at the head of its own creek, with its Castle, a ruin of rich domestic character, chiefly built by the above-mentioned Rhys ap Thomas. And Upton, lower down also among the creeks, has fragments to show of the once fine castle of the Malefants.

And on the northern side, above the town of Milford, at the head of Prix Pill, stands Castle Pill, in Elizabeth's time reckoned one of the strong castles of Pembrokeshire, and, in the civil wars, a stronghold of the Royalists. It was captured by the Parliamentary forces under Captain Willoughby, aided by a small fleet under Admiral Swanley. And at Rose Market we may find traces of the old manor house of the Walters—of which came Lucy Walters, one of Charles the Second's early loves, and the mother of the unhappy Duke of Monmouth.

But when we come to Milford Town we are in the presence of modern times. An old priory stood thereabouts, with a farmhouse and a few cottages; and there was an ancient chapel, dedicated to Saint

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Catherine, of which remains are left, and that held of the mother parish of Steynton; and all this formed part of the manors of Hulverston and Pill. These, towards the close of the last century, were the property of Sir William Hamilton, at one time Ambassador at Naples, whom his wife has rendered somewhat famous—that lovely Emma, whose charm and grace are represented on so many of Romney's canvasses. This enchanting, if not immaculate creature, was one of the presiding divinities of the new town. Hither she came in a kind of triumphal progress, with her husband and his nephew and heir, Charles Greville, and leading about in flowery fetters the hero of the Nile, everybody's hero, the great Lord Nelson.

A grand regatta in the haven celebrated the visit of the naval hero to the new town; and Lord Cawdor, whose seat of Stockpoole was not far distant, gave a silver cup, to be rowed for each year, in commemoration of the battle of the Nile, and the birthday of its hero. Nelson had many words, warm and sailor-like, to say about the Haven, its convenience, and suitability for a great naval station. A small Government dockyard had been in existence for some years on the south shore, beneath the principal terrace of Milford town. The town itself was founded but a little earlier; and an Act of Parliament of 1790 empowered Sir William Hamilton to build quays, and docks, and markets, to make roads, and to establish a police force and all the accessories of municipal existence.

The site of the new town was extremely pleasant, on a gentle rise surrounded by water except on the north. In front was the beautiful Haven, with its varied shores, and surroundings of richness and fertility, and its surface of purest azure,

Unmov'd of any wind which way so e'er it blows.

On the east side opens the broad inlet of Prix Pill; on the west the Priory Pill. Everything seemed to promise success for the new settlement; and soon the saws and hammers of the shipwrights began to make music among these once lonely shores. Lord Spencer, who was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the Mutiny of the Nore, gave orders for the establishment of the building-yard; and soon Mr. Barrallier, the leading constructor of the day, had three King's ships upon the stocks. These were the "Nautilus," a sloop of eighteen guns; the "Lavinia," a frigate of forty-four; and the "Milford," a battle-ship of seventy-four guns.

There was a design, too, to make Milford a port for fitting out whalers for the southern fishery. Certain Quaker families, who had carried on this enterprise from Nantucket, the chief seat of the American fishery, were invited to settle at Milford. They came with all their belongings. We hear of the Starbucks, and of Mr. Rotch, the chief merchant of the town, who were of that origin—a curious little backwater this in the tide of human migration that sets so constantly westwards. But the fishery came to nothing after all, nor can we find any trace of the descendants of these American settlers in the Milford of the present day.

As a packet station, too, Milford came into note, and five sailing packets, each of seventy tons, carried Her Majesty's mails to Waterford and such passengers as presented themselves. Mail coaches, too, began to come that way, and ship captains to bring in cargoes, and a writer of the period looks forward to seeing "commerce opening an acquaintance with the remotest parts of the globe."

But a perverse fate seems to be attached to this promising town. It is always going to be something great and splendid; a prospect which its natural advantages seem to justify. But the spell of the ill-conditioned fairy seems to rest upon it, and the fairest promises end in disappointment. In 1814 the naval dockyard was removed to the opposite shores of the Haven, and established upon a barren foreshore higher up and some seven miles from its mouth. With that the artificial prosperity of the place began to decay, and before long Milford was almost abandoned. Grass grew in its streets; most of its houses were empty, or let at a nominal rent to casual occupants. A few oyster dredgers and trading brigs frequented the port, but otherwise all was desolation, and the quays became as grass-grown as the streets.

The new naval dock was formed on the peninsula between the main Haven and the tidal basin of old Pembroke River, and took the name of Pembroke Dock, although it is really in the parish of Pater, so called from its church, which was originally dedicated to St. Padarn. Its great wall includes an area of some eighty-eight acres. Behind the dock rises the slope of an elevated plateau, upon which are artillery barracks, with fortifications that might prove formidable to an enemy unprovided with artillery. There is a strong battery on

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the western point of the peninsula, and batteries are planted here and there about the Haven which, if they do not render it impregnable, would still give some trouble to an enemy's fleet. But it is as a rendezvous for a fleet engaged in the defence of our western coast, with the great seaports of the Mersey, the Clyde, and the Bristol Channel, that Milford Haven is of the greatest utility, and for such a purpose the resources of the dockyard for repairing and refitting our complicated engines of war would be invaluable.

In these modern days the dockyard has turned out some powerful battle-ships. The "Anson," and the "Howe," with powerful guns "en barbette," and a protected central battery; the "Devastation," and the "Ajax," double-turreted battle-ships; the old "Iron Duke," of the earlier type of ironclads; with others of a lighter class — ships still armed with England's thunder, and forming part of the recently-assembled fleet—all these were built in Pembroke Dock, and are entitled to wear the leek at their mastheads.

A ferry from the dock takes people across to a new Milford, that was once called Neyland, which mainly owes its existence to the steam-packet station of the railway companies, whence sail the fine swift boats which keep up regular communication with Waterford, and which have replaced the old sailing-packets of seventy tons, that once gave their passengers plenty of tossing and rolling for their money. But the old Milford, which is still young for a town, has been much revived and recuperated in the progress of modern commerce. It carries on a considerable coasting trade, and is the seat of several useful manufactures, which add to the prosperity of the town, if they do not increase its comeliness. There are capital sands, too, at Hubberston, where a kind of watering-place has sprung up, much frequented by summer visitors.

If we follow up the estuary to its commencement, we shall find that it forks into two chief branches, supplied by the east and west Cleddau Rivers. The former is navigable for ships of one hundred and eighty tons or so, as far as Haverford West, which is a brisk and modern town, with an old castle once commanding the port, the keep of which has long done duty—happily very much of a sinecure—for a county gaol. Here we have the Flemings again, and Haverford West is said to have been originally settled by this people. But the history of the Flemings in Wales is very obscure, and they have left no definite traces anywhere of their existence. The Castle, as a token of English domination, has often been fiercely assailed by the Welsh; and once it sustained a siege by the French, who, in the days of Owen Glendwr, landed in Milford Haven, to help the Welsh in their last struggle for independence. The East Cleddau rises in the Precelly mountains, and pursues a lonely course till it joins its sister stream. From this point to the mouth of the Haven is a distance of nearly seventeen miles—a long stretch of lake-like placid waters, where the fighting ships of all the world might find anchorage.

GERMAN THRIFT AND INSURANCE.

Some time ago we commented on a movement in Germany to make men thrifty by Act of Parliament.* We did not then, and we do not now, have much faith in compulsory thrift; but the German scheme has since so grown and developed, and has so attracted the attention of all social reformers throughout the world, that it deserves further consideration. The new law, which passed the Reichstag this year, completes the German scheme of National Insurance.

Monsieur Léon Say once said of State Socialism, that it is a German philosophic production; but there is a great deal more than mere theoretic philosophy in the series of great schemes which have passed the German Legislature, and which have just reached their culmination. It may be that Mr. Herbert Spencer is right in regarding Socialism as the coming slavery; but there will be a good deal of difference in the servitude, according as the dominant Socialism be Democratic or Monarchic. But no one who watches the signs of the times, and observes the set of current thought, can fail to perceive that there is a much larger tacit acceptance of the doctrines of State Socialism, in our own country, than men appear to be aware of.

All men, in fact, have a bit of Socialism in their composition; but all men do not know it. Monsieur de Levaleye has expressed the conviction that Great Britain, which is so strict on individual freedom, now offers a larger welcome to State Socialism than any other nation. There are

* See "Compulsory Thrift," All the Year Round, New Series, No. 793, February, 1884.

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many persons who must join with Mr. Goschen in regarding the spread of these doctrines with misgiving — not so much from the principle they enfold (which may be regarded as a version of the Christian precept to bear one another's burdens) as from the dangers which surround the application of the principle.

The demands upon the State are growing year by year, and it is very difficult to show that any one of these demands is not just what private enterprise would have supplied a few years ago without question. It certainly is not by the withering of the individual that the State can be made to grow more and more powerful; but yet, the functions and responsibilities of the State, as regards the individual, are still the subject of much uncertainty. Here, in Great Britain, where we have always taken our stand upon individual freedom, we have never accepted the principle of "laissez faire" without considerable qualification.

The mixture of principle, and the apparent inconsistencies in practice, of British economics are often a source of perplexity to foreign economists. They do not always understand the compound action, accompanied by compromise, of our system. On the other hand, the average Briton finds it somewhat difficult to reconcile the principles of State Socialism with the iron rule of militarism in Germany. Yet they are not only not opposed, but actually allied. And it is to Germany that we must look for the most interesting and, probably, momentous movement in the whole history of social experiments.

It began some eight years ago, when the late Emperor William the First, in a now famous message to the Reichstag, reflected the lessons administered by Ferdinand Lassalle to Prince Bismarck. The world was startled, and the Social Democrats were checkmated, by a programme including the national provision of insurance against sickness, against accident, against incapacitation, and against old age, among the labouring classes. It is curious that this movement, just as did the Socialism of Bebel, grew out of the disturbances of, and following, the Franco-German war.

The feverish wave of industrial activity which swept over Germany in 1871, was not marked by any increase of comfort to the working classes there, and the succeeding period of reaction fell with especial severity upon them. A long term of extreme depression left Germany in a critical social condition, which the Imperial message was happily timed to relieve. When one remembers the outbreak of "Sansculottism" in France, it is difficult not to speculate on the possible consequences of the industrial and social tension in Germany, had not a bold Chancellor and a paternal Emperor courageously grasped the nettle of State Socialism.

The first measure proposed was that of Sick Insurance, which became law in 1883. By this law, a levy is made on the wages of the workers of from one-and-a-half to two per cent., and another levy upon the employers of one-third of the total amount required, in order to provide those who are disabled by sickness with one-half of the normal local wage for a period not exceeding thirteen weeks of sickness.

This was followed, in 1884, by the Accident Insurance law, under which workmen (exclusive, at present, of the smaller industries and domestic servants) receive, for complete disablement, two-thirds; and for partial disablement an equitable proportion; of the regular wage, as pension. In cases of death by accident, twenty days' wage is given for burial expenses, and an allowance is made to the widow of twenty per cent. of the wages of the deceased, with fifteen per cent. for each child under the age of fifteen; but the total allowance is not to exceed sixty per cent. in all. The funds under this law are entirely provided by the masters, who administer them with the assistance and advice of representatives of the men.

The third step which has been taken by Germany, and which only awaits a few minor adjustments to become Imperial law, is more far-reaching, and also more distinctly Socialistic. For one thing, it embraces all divisions of the working population of the country, and makes no exception in favour of agricultural labourers, domestic servants, and others, as did the first two measures. It directly concerns itself with the interests of something like eleven millions of German subjects dependent on manual labour of every sort, that is to say, working for regular hire. Its object is to combine and add to all the provisions of the preceding statutes, to secure a maintenance for the wage-earners in case of sickness, of accident, and of old age.

As with the other two laws, the operation is compulsory; but, unlike the other two, the State now steps in with pecuniary contributions. A scale of graduated weekly

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payments has been devised, not, as far as can be gathered, upon any exact actuarial plan, but upon a basis of probabilities.

The workers are divided into Classes, and rated, according to their Classes, at from twelve to thirty pfennigs* weekly, which payments have to be made by the masters in the first place, who, in turn, deduct one-half of the subscription from the weekly wage. An elaborate machinery has been devised for the accurate collection and checking of the weekly payments—a work involving an enormous amount of labour, and also a vast expense.

In return, the insured are entitled, in case of incapacitation, to a pension for life, or till recovery; and on reaching the age of seventy, to an old age pension. These pensions are graded to rise in proportion to the number of payments made by the insured, the minimum being sixty marks (sixty shillings) a year. But to this minimum, and to every pension from the Sick, and Accident, and Old Age fund, the State adds a fixed annual contribution of fifty marks (fifty shillings) per beneficiary.

This is where the Socialistic element comes in most forcibly—the reduction of all to the same level in the eye of the State. This is the most striking novelty in the German law, and is the one soft touch that relieves the stern formulation of Compulsory Thrift.

In both the first two laws, the annual contributions must eventually come out of the wages — although, in one case, the employer nominally pays one-third, and in the other he pays the whole—for the cost of labour comes to be estimated with this liability in view, just as the local burdens upon a house are considered in the rent. But, in the new law, the State steps in, ostensibly to relieve Labour of the burden of providing for a portion of its own future.

Of course, the State can only provide expenditure out of taxation, and that which the people receive the people must also pay; but then the beneficiaries under this Socialistic law are not taxpayers to any appreciable extent—they do not see the tariff burdens, and they do see the prospective allowances.

Certainly, these allowances do not seem large, from the standpoint of the skilled British workman. Thus, after the prescribed five years, after ten years, and at intervals of ten years up to fifty, the invalid pensions will be as under:

Years.	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.
5	114.70	119.40	131.15	140.55
10	119.40	128.80	152.80	171.10
20	128.80	147.60	194.60	262.20
30	138.20	166.40	236.90	293.30
40	147.60	185.20	279.20	354.40
50	157.00	204.00	321.50	415.50

Taking the mark at a shilling, it will be seen that the smallest pension is about five pounds fifteen shillings, and the largest only twenty pounds fifteen shillings, per annum.

The old age pensions consist of the Imperial subsidy of fifty marks already mentioned, and an allowance from the fund proportioned to the number of payments made into it. Not to fatigue the reader with somewhat perplexing scales, etc., it may be said that, supposing a man to serve for his whole life in the same Class of labour, his retiring pension in old age will be something like the following:

Years.	Class I.	Class II.	Class III.	Class IV.
10	68.80	78.20	87.60	97.0
20	87.60	106.40	129.20	134.0
30	106.40	134.60	162.80	181.0

A provision for old age of nine pounds one shilling per annum does not seem very handsome; but, in Germany, the workers are both more thrifty and more economical than the same class in this country. And a mark goes a great deal further in Germany than a shilling does in England.

For the purposes of this Insurance law, all workers in Germany are divided into four Classes, according to wage. Thus, Class I. includes those receiving wages up to three hundred and fifty marks per annum; Class II., those receiving from three hundred and fifty up to five hundred and fifty marks; Class III., those receiving from five hundred and fifty up to eight hundred and fifty marks; and Class IV., all above eight hundred and fifty marks. The first Class pays twelve pfennigs; the second, eighteen; the third, twenty-four; and the fourth, thirty pfennigs weekly into the fund; or rather, to speak more correctly, the masters are empowered to deduct one-half these amounts from the weekly wages of the men, and have to pay the other half themselves. For each weekly payment the worker is to receive an official voucher, as both receipt and certificate of registration. These vouchers take the form of stamps attached to cards, on which are forty-seven spaces, corresponding to the forty-seven weeks of the Insurance year.

* 8½ pfennigs = one penny. 1 mark = one shilling.

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Without going into further detail, it may be said that the total levy upon the workers, under the three regulations, will average from five to seven and a half per cent. of the wages received. This is no small impost. Comparisons might be made with the contributions by British workmen to their Friendly Societies, Benefit Clubs, and so on; but then, the German system applies to those persons as well who would never be prudent enough to become members of such associations.

It is a design to manufacture thrift, as well as to discourage emigration; for, it is to be noted that every emigrant would lose all the contributions he had made to the funds. In fact, there is such a curious mixture of motive and principle in the whole movement, that it is hardly possible to form any pronounced opinion with regard to its possible success. But a great war would certainly upset all the machinery of the scheme, the working out of which, in its minute details, will require a vast army of clerks—paid and voluntary.

KULINISM.

The name is probably unfamiliar to most readers; but it is that which has been given to one of the most curious social institutions in the world. It has been described as one of the worst excrescences of Hinduism; and it is so closely associated with Caste, which we have already explained, and with infant-marriage, which is one of the curses of India, that a brief explanation will doubtless be found of interest.

To explain the origin, one must go back into the misty legends of Hindu history.

There was once a King in Bengal called Adisur, a member of the Sen, or Medical Caste, who found that the number of Brahmans in his kingdom had become greatly reduced, and that those who remained were mostly ignorant men, who could not read the Vedas in the original Sanskrit. Once, when there was an unusual drought, and the King desired to make sacrifices, no qualified priests could be found, and Adisur had to send to the King of Kanouj for the loan of some. Five priests of Kanouj were induced to migrate to Adisur's territory of Gour, and these were Brahmans of the very highest class, who professed to trace their origin to the sons of Brahma.

Arrived at Gour, they at once began their sacrificial work, and greatly impressed with their piety and learning all the Princes who gathered to the ceremonies.

In fine, the five settled down in Gour, loaded by the King with honours and emoluments; but they would not associate with the degraded Brahmans they found there, nor would they intermarry with them. They formed an entirely separate sect, or caste; but their descendants, who were numerous, were not so scrupulous, and began to fraternise to some extent with the native Brahmans.

Then there came to the throne a King called Ballala Sen, a son of the River Brahmaputra, so wise and good that the poets have exhausted themselves in his praise. He saw that the Kanouj families had deteriorated in moral and intellectual quality, and he resolved to rearrange the priests into classes. He selected the best of them, and set these apart above all the others, giving them the title of Kul, or Honourable; and to the less worthy he gave less honourable titles. The Kulins were to be the founders of a spiritual aristocracy, and their children were to inherit all the honours and privileges granted to their fathers.

Thus originated the Kulins, who are so distinguished that the privilege of a Kulin cannot even now be taken from him for any personal transgression. If he marries a woman not of a Kulin family it is his children who suffer, not himself. They are such very exalted beings, and have such a superabundant supply of blue-blood, that, as a rule, they consider it quite beneath their dignity to do any work of any kind. But although such honourable men, they are quite willing to be supported by the relatives of those whom they condescend to marry. And so it has come about that marriage has become the general profession of the Kulins.

There were four chief orders, or "mels" of Kulins, formed by King Ballala, and some secondary orders. King Lakshman, the son and successor of Ballala, enlarged and extended the secondary orders to the number of some thirty subdivisions, but left the four primary orders untouched.

The next worthy class to the Kulins constituted by Ballala, were called the Srotriyas, formed of the most meritorious of the descendants of the mixed marriages of some of the descendants of the five original Kanouj Brahmans with the native Brahmans. They were regarded as standing midway in worth and nobility between

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the Kulins and the aboriginal priests, who were called Saptasatis. These Srotriyas were granted the privilege of marrying their daughters to Kulins, and their pride and glory is to provide wives for the exalted and super-excellent Kulins, who cannot marry the women of any other caste without degrading their own children to a lower rank.

As a Hindu writer has explained it: "The Kulins are strictly forbidden, on pain of forfeiting their title, to receive wives from families which are inferior to themselves, with the exception of the Srotriyas. When this rule is transgressed, although the delinquent himself does not suffer personally, his 'Kul' is said to be broken. He himself dies, as he was born, in the enjoyment of his honour; but his offspring forfeit the title, and the glory of the family becomes tarnished."

Nevertheless, the children of an unequal marriage are not reduced at one blow to the level of common Brahmans. The odour of sanctity preserves them for four or five generations, during which they gradually decline in nobility and lustre, and it is not until the fifth generation that they reach the level of the common herd. The sins of the fathers are thus visited unto the fourth and fifth generations.

Mr. W. J. Wilkins, in whose valuable work on "Modern Hinduism" much interesting information is given about our Indian fellow-subjects, says that it is now very difficult to find Brahmans of unbroken "Kul;" and that many of the highest rank now are once or twice removed from the "pur sang."

Like all rules, those of the Kulin nobility have become relaxed by time, and not only are the Srotriyas anxious for alliance with them, but even inferior Brahman fathers try to secure Kulin sons-in-law whenever they can. Those who are unable to enter the sacred arena may, at least, like the little boys peeping under the sides of the circus tent, rejoice in a sight of "the 'oofs of the 'orses." Every man has his price—even a Kulin—and the once unpurchaseable honour of King Ballala Sen is now made a subject of regular traffic. Immense sums of money are constantly being paid by wealthy but low-class Brahmans to induce some blue-blooded Kulin to add his daughter to the number of the aristocrat's nominal wives. And the adult Kulin has another means of wealth-getting within his own clan. Let us again see what the native writer says: "The laws which regulate the marriage of Kulin females are very stringent; these must not on any account be given to any unless of an equal or superior grade. Neither Srotriyas, nor any inferior order, can aspire to the hand of a Kulin's daughter. An indelible disgrace would be affixed upon such a degradation of a girl of birth and family. Thus her hereditary honour becomes her heaviest misfortune. The greatest difficulty is experienced in settling her in life. The only circles from which a husband can be selected are in request everywhere and by everybody. To outbid the Srotriyas and others in the purchase of a noble bridegroom requires larger funds than many a Kulin can command. The greatest misery and distress are accordingly occasioned. . . The severest condemnation is passed on a Brahman who neglects to get his daughter married before her tenth year. The most meritorious way of disposing of her is to present her at the hymeneal altar when she is eight years old, the next before her ninth year is terminated. At all events, her wedding must not be delayed beyond her tenth year."

What, then, is the Kulin parent of limited means to do? He may not allow his daughter to marry beneath her, and he cannot afford to purchase her a husband all to herself out of his own caste. So he can only buy her a share in a "noble" husband, in the shape of some withered old Kulin, who, although he has a regiment of wives already, is willing to assist a member of his order out of a difficulty—for a consideration. To understand the intensity of a Hindu parent's feeling on the subject of his daughter's marriage, is not easy, perhaps, for Englishmen; but yet Brahmans have been known to make a daughter go through the marriage ceremony with a man on the point of death, rather than have the disgrace of having her left on their hands after the limit of the orthodox marriageable age.

It is in this feeling and correlative custom that one finds one of the greatest curses of modern India. Most of the old Hindu prejudices are weakening one by one—travel and European intercourse are doing much to soften the rigours of caste; but infant-marriage and child-widowhood still are blots upon the social system. And the misery attendant upon both cannot well be expressed in words suitable for these pages.

Polygamy is not the rule of the Hindu

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system. Kulins are many-wived, not because they are Hindus, or even Brahmans, but because they are Kulins—exalted, ennobled beings with whom to have alliance is worldly glory and spiritual honour. And Kulinism, it must be admitted, has its humorous side.

The husband of many wives, the Kulin cannot take a bride home to his father's house on the approved Hindu plan. On the contrary, the bride takes the bridegroom home to her father's house, where he stays just as long as it suits him. If the fathers of his other wives make him comfortable enough, he will honour them occasionally with a visit; if not, he waits until another desperate father wants an ornamental son-in-law, and is willing and able to bid high for one. The Kulin husband cares not if he never sees the faces of his numerous brides again. His business is simply to marry them, to accept the gifts showered on him, to leave to the girls the noble protection of his exalted name, and then to leave them to do what they please.

There are some right-minded Kulins who prefer to limit their affections to one wife, and to devote themselves to provide a comfortable home for her by their own labours. But the majority of them live upon their fathers-in-law, and the more they have of these supporters the merrier is their life.

It should be said that when the neighbouring King of Barender saw the glory of the five Brahmans imported by King Adisur into Gour, he also applied to the King of Kanouj for the like number of holy men. Thus in Barender was established another Kulin aristocracy; but, curiously enough, the descendants of the Barender Brahmans and those of the Gour or Rareya Brahmans do not intermarry, nor exchange hospitalities. They are rival orders of nobility.

There is no authority for Kulinism in the Hindu Scriptures; and some of the best Hindus have endeavoured over and over again to put an end to it. Nevertheless, it continues as a standing evil in the country.

The theory is for each Kulin to marry at least two wives; one of his own order, whom he leaves at her father's house, the other a Srotriya, whom he takes to his own house. But by far the larger portion of them live by "excessive polygamy"—obtaining large presents at every marriage, and as often as they condescend to visit their fathers-in-law. A Kulin who has married forty or fifty wives, merely goes from house to house, and is fed, clothed, and pampered to his heart's content.

Lest this should seem an exaggeration, we may quote from a document signed by five Hindu gentlemen, devoted to an exposure of the strange custom. They say that polygamy is resorted to as a sole means of livelihood by many Kulins, who exact "considerations" for each marriage, and presents from the families of the brides at each visit; that even quite old men pursue the profession; that the husband often never sees his wife after the marriage; that as many as three, four, and "even twenty-three" marriages have been known to be contracted by one man in one day; that cases are known and cited of men who have married ten, twenty, forty, fifty, seventy-two, eighty, and eighty-two wives; and even that cases have been reported by pundits of one hundred and even one hundred and fifty wives.

Notwithstanding all this, the absurd regulations as to marriage render it impossible for many Kulin women to find husbands within their own ranks. Both the married and unmarried daughters of Kulins live in the utmost misery. Families are often ruined, in order to provide the large sums necessary to procure Kulin husbands for their girls; but many are unable to find the means to procure that honour.

A Hindu lady, the Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, who has recently — through Messrs. George Bell and Sons—published a most interesting account of the condition and life of "The High-Caste Hindu Woman," writes thus about the matter:

"The Brahmans of Eastern India have observed successfully their clan-prejudice for hundreds of years, despite poverty; they have done this, in part, by taking advantage of the custom of polygamy. A Brahman of a high clan will marry ten, eleven, twenty, or even one hundred and fifty girls. He makes a business of it. He goes up and down the land marrying girls, receiving presents from their parents, and immediately bidding good-bye to the brides; going home, he never returns to them. The illustrious Brahman need not bother himself with the care of supporting so many wives, for the parents pledge themselves to maintain the daughter all her life, if she stays with them to the end. In case of such a marriage as this, the father is not required to spend money beyond his means, nor is it difficult for him to support the daughter, for she is useful to the

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family in doing the cooking and other household work; moreover, the father has the satisfaction, first, of having given his daughter in marriage, and thereby having escaped disgrace and the ridicule of society; secondly, of having obtained for himself the bright mansions of the gods, since his daughter's husband is a Brahman of high class."

Such is Kulinism—surely one of the strangest survivals in our time of an ancient superstition. It could only survive in a land where the popular belief is that a woman can have no salvation unless she be formally married, and where many girl-infants are given in marriage while they are still in the cradle.

IN A PLACE OF SECURITY.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

By FREDERICK TALBOT.

CHAPTER III.

All this time Bertie was miserable enough, wandering aimlessly about in the City, whither he had drifted without any definite purpose, after having lost sight of George Melitus. He was not at all pleased with his sweetheart's secret visit to the City. And he had an uneasy feeling that some danger hung over her which he was powerless to avert. That dark young man's look of exultation and triumph when he had marked down Louise to her destination, betokened something dangerous.

And yet what could Bertie do if Louise would not take him into her confidence? The young man drifted on till he got among the docks and shipping, and, loitering along one of the wharves that border the river below-bridge, he noticed a black, ugly-looking steamer, which was just completing her cargo alongside. She was a foreigner evidently. Her name was painted in Greek characters on the stern—Krapoticas, or something similar. The master of the craft, a swarthy Levantine, was pacing up and down on the small strip of quarter-deck that was clear of cargo, and he was conversing eagerly with a companion, whom Bertie recognised as the dark young man who had shadowed Louise. Presently the young man stepped over the vessel's side and came ashore.

"Yes, sir," said a man, belonging to the wharf, to whom he addressed some enquiry, "it will be full high-water just about noon, and she'll get away on the top of the tide. And your things will be marked M in a diamond. I'll look after 'em."

In the course of the afternoon, Bertie made an excuse to call at the Russell Mansions. To his delight he was received, and found Louise in a much softened mood. Not a word was said about the visit to the City; but Louise gave a description of Mr. Papyrus and his departure, and of his terrible threat to take her over in Chancery. Bertie was alarmed.

"There is no saying what these fellows can do," he said, "with a scampish lawyer or two in their pay." And if Louise were in Chancery it would be a high contempt to marry her.

The moral that Bertie drew from this was that she should marry him at once, and adopt him as her guardian. Louise was half convinced.

"But then," she said, "you can't marry Aunt Irene too, and nurse and Luigi, and I can't desert them."

There was another way, but Louise did not venture to suggest it. Bertie might leave the army and come and live there. She had enough for both of them. But how could she explain all that in defiance of her father's prohibition? And Bertie was dismissed with the understanding that he should come again on the morrow, when some plan should be decided upon.

And now, in considerably better spirits, Louise began her arrangements for the future. The nurse had arrived, and Constantia was finally banished from the sick-room. She was now packing all her belongings. It was surprising how calmly she took the matter.

Nurse was a little disappointed, she would have liked to see her downfall accompanied by signs of rage and discomfiture; but Constantia went about with the meekness and patience of a Sister of Mercy. In due time her luggage was ready — many heavy cases — "whereas," commented nurse, sarcastically, "when she came she had nothing but a little hand-bag." And the packages were all neatly marked in white paint, with the letter M enclosed in a lozenge-shaped figure. A luggage-van came and took them all away after dark.

And then Constantia came to say good-bye, still meek and forgiving. Louise felt remorseful and ill at ease, feeling that she had done the girl an injustice. She had ordered some supper for her; but she would partake of nothing but some chocolate, which the girls partook of together.

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"I shall be gone before you are down to-morrow," said Constantia, "so, good-bye."

Tears stood in her eyes. Louise also was weeping in sympathy, and Constantia folded her in an embrace that was almost fierce in its intensity. Was it affection, or a desire to cut her throat? Louise could not tell. But she had no longer any fear. She had hung her key round her neck, and, knowing it safe, there was nothing more to dread. But, when Constantia had retired, a strange drowsiness came over Louise. The excitements of the day, no doubt, would account for that. No; she would not have nurse to sleep in her room, or Luigi to watch outside. There was no more danger now. She locked her door carefully, that was all, and fell into a heavy, dreamless sleep the moment that her head touched the pillow.

There was good news for Louise next morning. Aunt Irene had passed an excellent night, and had recovered consciousness so far as to ask for her niece. Constantia, too, had departed; and nothing had been seen of Mr. Papyrus, although he had promised an early visit. But Louise was asleep still; and at noon, when Bertie came to see her, she still slept.

"I'm not going to waken her," said nurse. "She has had trouble enough lately, poor child; let her sleep it off."

But in a few moments there was heard a cry of alarm and distress from Louise's room. "My key, nurse! I have lost my key!"

"And if you have lost a key, dear, what does it matter?" cried nurse, soothingly, as she entered the room. The door was unfastened, although Louise had locked it the night before.

"But, nurse, you don't know; it is the key of everything — of life, happiness—everything."

Louise had gone to sleep with the key safely hanging from a ribbon round her neck. The ribbon was there, cut in two; but the key was gone. And certainly there was the mark of a chisel on the door-jamb, as if somebody had forced back the lock. Was anything else missing? Nothing, as far as could be seen at a hasty glance, except—yes, Louise's hat was gone, and the costume she had worn the day before, when she went into the City.

Bertie was waiting in the drawing-room; and Louise ran to him in dressing-gown and slippers, and with hair hanging down.

"Oh, Herbert, help me! I have been robbed of my key—of everything." And in a few hasty words she told him of the fortune that had been locked up in the iron safe, and of the imminent peril there was of losing it. For now the plot was evident; and still more evident when Bertie revealed what he had seen the day before. Oh, that he had warned her! Oh, that she had trusted him!

Constantia had carried out the scheme, no doubt, which her brother had perhaps suggested. Constantia had drugged the chocolate. Constantia, in her treacherous embrace, had felt the key, as it hung at her friend's throat. She had forced the door, taken the key, and, clothed in Louise's costume, and resembling her in height and figure and general appearance, she would have had no difficulty in obtaining entrance to the vaults of the "Security Company," when her key would place the contents of the safe at her mercy. And Constantia had been given several hours' start; and as for tracing her, what was there to trace her by? Even the list of securities was with the rest, and beyond Louise's vague recollection of certain bonds among them, there was nothing to identify the spoils.

All was lost, the dream of a day had departed, and once more the spectre of poverty and social extinction resumed its sway. And, to crown all, there could be heard in the hall the stentorian tones of Papyrus, evidently in terrible anger.

"Where is my ten shousant pount? Come, where is my ten shousant pount?"

"Oh, treacherous talisman," cried Louise, bursting into tears. "Why did you not warn me of all this?"

But it was not the fault of the talisman, which had lain neglected in the young lady's drawer ever since she had discovered the key of the safe. But now, as she held it in her hands, the casket closed and fastened at a touch, although before she had long tried in vain to shut it.

Still, the voice of Papyrus could be heard. "Oh, where is my ten shousant pount?" And at that moment something like an inspiration darted into Herbert's mind. He ran out to meet Papyrus.

"Where is your ten thousand pounds? Why, sailing down the river in the 'Krapoticas,' while George and Constantia are sitting in the cabin counting their money, and laughing at you for an ass."

"What, what!" roared Papyrus; "dey have run away and robbed me! Oh, the scoundrels! the villains!"

"Come along, then; we will stop them," cried Bertie, pushing Papyrus towards the door. "There is nothing like setting a

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thief to catch a thief. Good-bye, dearest; I will come back with fortune on my wings."

The day passed slowly and dismally enough with Louise. A telegram came from Bertie, dated Gravesend. They had just missed the "Krapoticas." But they hoped to have better luck at Dover.

Then, just at midnight, came another telegram from Dover. "'Krapoticas' sunk in the Downs — in collision. Some of crew saved; but passengers drowned. Divers will be employed; but Papyrus claims all salvage. Position difficult. Consult lawyers."

Louise left this telegram open on the table, while she went in to pay a final visit to her aunt. The patient had revived wonderfully since Constantia's departure; she recognised Louise, and could speak a little, though evidently her mind was not yet clear, for she talked about her brother, and how glad she was that he had returned.

But when Louise returned to the sitting-room, she saw a strange figure seated at the table, perusing the telegram just received through a pair of eye-glasses.

"Look here," said the intruder, without looking up, "tell them not to bother about divers and lawyers, for I've got the swag myself."

Louise screamed, and then ran into the visitor's arms. The face, the voice were her father's; and he was no ghost, but solid, substantial flesh and blood.

"It was just this," said Mr. Cornely, as he sat refreshing himself, after a long, fatiguing day, with a pipe and glass of toddy. "There were no Kurds at all about the business, but just George, who cut me down as we were shooting in the mountains, and left me there for dead. Still, I got one at him, and I think I broke his arm. However, not being dead, I was picked up by some of those same Kurds who have got such a bad name in the business, and very kindly they treated me. Getting a little better, I found that my camp had been broken up, and all my treasures transported to the coast, and there they were lying still, with the Government seals upon them, waiting till it was safe for the rascals to ship them. Well, I got home as fast as I could by a cargo-steamer that passed that way, and, landing at the docks, it struck me that I would go and look after our little store in the City just to make sure it was all right. At the very door I met that girl. She wasn't George's sister, by-the-bye. And there was George waiting for her.

"'Secured at last,' he said, with a charming smile.

"'Yes, that's just what you are,' I said, putting my hand on his shoulder.

"George dropped. He thought I was a ghost come against him. And when he recovered a bit, he didn't show any more fight, but the pair of them came with me as quiet as lambs. And when I had looked through the bonds, and found them all right:

"'Now, you two were going to hook it. Well, go! Here's a hundred pounds for your expenses, and try to lead a better life.'

"I did this, Louey, you know, not wishing that any of your mother's relations should be hanged. But it seems they met with judgement all the same. As for Papyrus, he'll never show those bills again."

Of Mr. Papyrus, indeed, nothing more was heard. He did not venture to produce his bills, and, if he spent any money expecting to recover treasure from the "Krapoticas," it is to be feared he was disappointed. But as to whether George and Constantia were really drowned, or whether they were taken on board some ship and preferred, thereafter, to sink their former identity, it is not possible to speak with certainty.

There was a gay wedding in Hanover Square, when the lovely daughter of that distinguished Orientalist, Lucien Cornely, was led to the altar by Herbert, the son of the equally famous Colonel Shepstone. It was Cornely himself who hung round the neck of the happy bride an amulet curious and beautiful, but of no great intrinsic value. "But the key is inside," whispered Lucien to his blushing daughter, "and all the little faggots are put back in the safe; so, if your husband keeps you short of coin, you know where to go."

"I shall always wear the amulet for your sake, father," said Louise, kissing him gratefully; "but the key is too much responsibility; and, with your leave"—taking it out and popping it into her husband's waistcoat-pocket—"I will put it into a place of security."

EDITORIAL NOTE.—In No. 31 of the Third Series of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, dated August 3rd, the name of Mrs. Guy is given by the writer of "Yachting in Still Waters" as the author of "Punch's" famous advice to people about to marry. I am requested by the lady in question to say that the statement has no foundation in fact.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 40.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V. OUT OF HIS ELEMENT.

CAN any of us be sure that along the path of life's daily routine we are not journeying to some great convulsion of our outward circumstances, or of our inward spiritual thought? Sometimes coming events, we are told, cast their shadows before them; we are seized with a dread that has no apparent cause, or we are urged to action by some unrecognised agency. Men or women of the world we may be, sceptics or believers, spiritually or carnally-minded, and yet to all, at special moments, there comes a great feeling of overshadowing mystery; other worlds are round us, and we peer vainly about us, trying to solve the riddle of life.

Hoel had not again seen Elva; his visit had terminated the next morning, and for some days he had been firmly settled in his luxurious bachelor quarters.

Here he felt superior to circumstances. He was not wealthy, but wanted nothing he could not procure. In the dim background he even occasionally contemplated an inheritance from his uncle, Mellish Fenner, who lived laborious days in doing nothing; but this inheritance Hoel despised, and did not reckon on it, or professed not to do so. Still, in his present condition, Hoel knew that he could not marry unless his wife were rich, and he was above hunting for riches.

Hoel had so many virtues, that it was difficult for his sins to find him out. He was high-minded in thought, word, and deed; he was handsome; he was very clever, and possessed fine literary and critical faculty, which promised to make him a prince among critics. Several journals had already found this out, and only did not proclaim it for fear of rousing competition. Moreover, he had a just estimate of himself, which, on the one hand, prevented him from being conceited, and on the other from underestimating his powers, and therefore rendering them less useful to him. But Hoel was over-refined with that over-refinement which, though not in the least effeminate, seems slowly to kill the more rugged excellence which, for want of a better word, we may call a grand character.

Everything about Hoel Fenner helped this over-refinement to increase — that delightful sitting-room, furnished with exquisite taste, where he often gave afternoon tea to cousins, and cousins' cousins, and literary ladies and their friends; the dining-room, which was also his library, fitted with the best in literature, ancient and modern, not forgetting a row for individual taste, and which spoke well of the man. Yes, in Hoel's lodgings, from the butler to the books, everything was perfect; and the owner preferred his rooms to the Johnstonian Club, where pleasant men talked literary shop-gossip. Lately Hoel Fenner had been taking the work of the literary editor at "The Current Reader's" office. It was here he had come across Jesse Vicary, who had gone there to ask for reporting work; and Hoel had been attracted to him by that undefinable something which he possessed, and which Hoel vaguely felt was wanting in himself.

Such was Hoel Fenner; and yet, though we have placed one hand on the weak

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spot, most of his friends and acquaintances would have rejected the idea of any imperfection in their hero.

As one of his friends said: "Hoel Fenner is a first-rate fellow; will make his mark—and a good deep dent it will be. No conceit, either, about him. Pity he doesn't marry, for there are so many girls ready to have him."

But Hoel had never given a chance to any of the many girls ready to have him. Men called him prudent; women liked him because "Il ne faisait pas des jaloux;" and yet any one looking deeper down below this perfect evenness of temperament, this perfect control of passion—if this word control can be used about something which gave him so little trouble—would have seen that all this betokened a want in his character.

Hoel had no family ties; that perhaps partly accounted for his defect. He had been left an orphan quite young, but Mellish Fenner had done his duty, and had looked upon his nephew as his adopted son. Hoel had responded gladly, even nobly to this call. His uncle had nothing to complain of, but just as he was going to college, Mellish Fenner had told his nephew that if he continued to give him satisfaction, he should inherit his fortune. Mr. Fenner put that "if" just to satisfy his love of power; to himself he said it was for Hoel's good; and in one sense it answered its purpose. Hoel's pride rose with a bound. He would be independent of all "ifs;" he would earn his own fortune, and his Uncle Mellish might, if he chose, leave his money to the London Hospital. On the other hand, that "if" caused Hoel to see clearly that his uncle was selfish, and from henceforth the courtesy he showed to the invalid came no more from love, but from a sense of superiority. He, Hoel, would never be selfish or exacting in this manner; he would not try to bind others to him by false ties; in fact, he would not be at all like his Uncle Mellish, but like a much higher caste of being — namely, Hoel Fenner.

Mellish Fenner never found out this reasoning, he only noted that Hoel was more and more praiseworthy; that he succeeded in all he undertook; and that, though he was now obliged to live in London, he was just as courteous and attentive when he ran down to Hastings to see him. The less Hoel required the money, the more his uncle determined he should have it; but he could never bring himself to say: "Hoel, I am going to make my will in your favour." That bit of power over a younger and stronger life was too sweet to the old man.

At this time, therefore, Hoel was determined not to believe in Uncle Mellish's fortune, and he took great pains not to show increased tenderness for the poor hypochondriac, for fear it should be imagined that he was thinking of his money. And so those two who might have bestowed untold blessings on each other failed, just because that little word "if" had never been retracted.

This long explanation is needed to show both the greatness and the weakness of Hoel; but to-day, as he sat in his easy-chair over a small fire, he felt that since his return to town he had not been quite the same man. Something had ruffled the perfect evenness of his lake's surface, and that something was Elva Kestell!

Against his will he could see her with that glorious background of moorland; he could trace the tall figure; he could again look with pleasure at that glow of health, of youth, and passion of life which he had never seen before in any young woman. Crude as was her mind, she possessed that touch of the natural which made him, Hoel Fenner, with all his polish, recognise in her a true sketch from nature, not a highly-finished painting where much of the eternal truth has been improved away by bare imitation. Elva was a rugged sketch, true, if unfinished.

"But why did she throw away my flowers? Has she foolish ideas about not accepting flowers? No, that did not seem at all probable."

There was no answer to this question, and, feeling impatient at finding something he could not solve, Hoel took up a novel which had to be reviewed. It was weary work, but he was conscientious. He believed that criticism required the best from him; that the object was to advance art and not to display the reviewer's stilted sayings, which any tyro knows are merely a matter of habit. If he abused a book he did so believing that the author ought to be taught something or else choked off; but even honest reviewers are mortal, and this evening he felt so much disinclined to do his work that presently he threw down the book and put off the evil hour.

From Elva his mind naturally strayed to Vicary. It was strange that he should

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just have hit upon the people who knew his early history—very strange. He opened his pocket-book and looked out his address. It was far away from Saint Anselm Street; but Hoel remembered he had promised to call if any work turned up, and, as it so happened that the sub-editor of "The Current Reader" wanted a shorthand writer to take down a particular lecture, Hoel decided that this should be his excuse for going out this evening, and, having finished his cigar, he went forth.

"That was a fine piece of philanthropy," he thought, "on the part of Mr. Kestell. It's not often that attempts of this kind answer, however; but when one succeeds in raising a fellow-creature from the lowest state to one far superior, the reward must be great. Some day, I think I shall try the experiment. It's a modern craze, and it's the fashion to din the poor into one's ears. Now, if one had a specimen ready to show, one would have paid toll to fashionable philanthropy. Yes, some day I shall look out for this specimen."

At present, the thought of this future good deed quite satisfied Hoel; but it did not prevent him from having to overcome a certain mental and physical repugnance when 'Liza ushered him up the dark, airless, and not over-clean staircase of No. 21, Golden Sparrow Street.

Jesse Vicary rose hastily from his chair and pushed back a pile of books, with a bright smile on his face, as he accepted the proffered hand.

"This is kind of you, Mr. Fenner, very kind, to come all this way to see me. Will you sit down? I can provide a chair, though usually they are full of books."

Hoel had not intended to sit down. He had meant to say that he was looking in for a minute; but once again he was impressed by the mysterious power which Jesse exercised over those who came in contact with him. Hoel wondered why this man, who had come from the lowest rung of the ladder, should be so devoid of false shyness. Thinking to discover this riddle he accepted the chair.

"Don't turn out any books for me," said Hoel. "We of the Grub Street brotherhood feel as if we were on a desert island if we see no books."

Hoel tried not to be condescending; but he was conscious that he was trying, whilst his companion had the advantage over him of being perfectly natural.

"You wished for some extra work, you told me, Mr. Vicary, and it so happens that we want Dr. Law's lecture—which comes off next Thursday evening at the Institute—reported rather more carefully than the newspaper reporter is accustomed to do it. I thought you might try your hand at it."

"It is very good of you to remember me. Thank you; I shall be delighted. I have improved lately, as a friend of mine lets me help him at the House occasionally; but I dare not do too much night work. This I can well manage. I am most grateful."

"Don't say anything about that; and, by the way" (always doubt a fact being unimportant when so prefaced), "don't credit me with a better memory than I possess, for I ought to tell you that I have lately been meeting some friends of yours."

"Of mine?" said Vicary, quickly. "I have so few in London."

"No, not in London, but at Rushbrook."

Jesse's bright smile was a pleasure to see; he admired Mr. Fenner, and this connecting link seemed to make him all at once his friend, if he might use such an expression even to himself about one so much above him.

"Then you saw Mr. Kestell and the young ladies. Did they mention my sister?"

"Yes, Miss Kestell, the eldest one, talked about her."

Vicary, who had been standing up, stooped down a moment to arrange some books; then, half-sitting on a low bookcase, he said:

"You understand now, sir, why I want extra work. I have but one relation in the world, and I want to make a home for my sister Symee. I don't think it any shame for a woman to earn her bread in service; but it is hard upon any woman never to have known a home, nor parents, and to have no one to speak a familiar word to her. Symee has been all her life at Rushbrook; at least, when a child, she was at the farm-house close by, and I was away at school. Then, when she was thirteen, Mr. Kestell took her into his house. He has been very good to her, to both of us; we can never repay him; but, all the same, it will be the happiest day of my life when I can say: 'Symee, come home!' It does a man good to have such an object before him to urge him on; to have some one he loves above himself. Don't you think so, sir?"

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It was a curious question to put to Hoel Fenner, because he was at present perfectly happy without this object. The self-denial which springs from love was to him an unknown force. It was only since he had seen Elva that the very faintest glimmer of light from that other world had pierced through his own peaceful atmosphere; but so faint was this glimmer that, being on the whole no hypocrite, he said, frankly:

"I have never had even a sister to work for, and I think I have been able to content myself."

Hoel's glance rested as he spoke on a good print of Saint Christopher. He rose up and went to it, noting that Memling was the artist, and that Strixner was the engraver.

"This is a good print. Does it belong to you, or to the house?"

"That is mine. My sister had it given to her by Miss Amice Kestell, and asked leave to hand it over to me. Symee knew I should like it, but not how much it would help me. That big strong giant, finding the burden of the Infant Christ almost more than he can do with, is a grand thought; and one sees he means to keep on till he has got to the other side. Then, though the rocks look cruel, there is the sun behind him, though he does not see it. I wonder sometimes why it is that we do not teach more with pictures. It is fortunate the Bible words are so plain, however, so that even our poorest, when they hear them, can make a picture for themselves in their own minds."

Jesse spoke quite naturally, as if he were merely speaking his thoughts out and expecting a sympathetic answer, so that Hoel was ashamed to show how little this kind of conversation was in his line.

"I doubt whether art would impress the masses very much, though that's rather the jargon of the time. Still, I believe that the clergy have in that direction a good deal increased their—what shall I call them?—stage properties."

Hoel could not mistake the expression of the intense feeling of disappointment in Vicary's face; he felt angry at having made a mistake; it would have been better simply to acquiesce. Before Hoel could retrieve his error, 'Liza's knuckles and shrill tones were both audible.

"If 'please, Mr. Vicary, there's a gentleman as wants to see you particular."

The gentleman evidently had not studied the rules of etiquette, for he followed 'Liza too closely to give Jesse a chance of asking Mr. Fenner's leave. Hoel rose; but as the new-comer blocked up the doorway, and as he, Hoel, did not wish to leave Vicary with a bad impression of him, and was also curious about Vicary's friends, he remained where he was.

The new-comer was a tall, gaunt man, with deep-set eyes, very shabby garments, and long, thin hands. He brought with him into the room a reeking odour of stale tobacco and recent spirits, which Hoel thought most objectionable; but in spite of this the stranger interested him, or rather the unusual scene in which he was participating.

Jesse was as friendly and natural with this new visitor as he had been with the refined, literary Hoel; he brought a chair forward for the new-comer, who seemed almost too tall to be left standing.

"Mr. Fenner, this is my friend, Obed Diggings; he lived for some years at Greystone, and that seems to make us quite old friends. Now we are both obliged to live in London."

Hoel bowed graciously; he was getting over the smell of tobacco, and the surroundings were impressing themselves on his mental retina.

Obed Diggings turned towards Hoel and looked him over with a keen, piercing glance. It was not a glance of surprise, but of scrutiny; then apparently accepting him as Jesse's friend, and therefore his equal, he said:

"Very glad to make your acquaintance, sir." Obed sat down, and leant his long, thin arms on a pile of books. "I hope, sir, I'm not disturbing you and our friend Vicary. He sees me pretty often; eh, Jesse, my lad? But though I'm double his age, I don't mind owning to you, sir, that I come here for help. There's many besides me who does that, and they don't go away empty; there's always something here to fill the cask."

"Come, Mr. Diggings," laughed Jesse, "you forget we're not alone. Mr. Fenner won't be taken in by your fine words; he knows I'm only a clerk, and not a millionaire. All the help I can give you is contained in a nutshell. You see, sir, I'm a good listener, and Mr. Diggings is full of ideas."

Mr. Diggings did not join in the laugh, but he gravely tapped his forehead.

"Yes, there's a heap of ideas here, they come, and go, and tread on each other's heels, but in bad times they get starved, and cry out for food."

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As he spoke, the strange visitor took from an outside pocket a bundle tied up in a red pocket-handkerchief.

"I've brought it for you to see, Jesse; you've got such a good, clear head, that I like you to give a word to my things. This time, however, I think it's perfect; the world will soon know the name of Obed Diggings. Look here, Jesse, and you, sir, too, please. Can anything be more neat and handy than this? Why, we shan't be able to make them fast enough. I think I shall take Louis into partnership, or pay him by piece-work."

Hoel Fenner could not repress a smile of amusement as he approached the table, and saw Obed undoing the knots of the handkerchief with feverish energy, and taking out with great care a wooden photograph frame made in the shape of a heart, with a support behind to make it to stand on a table.

Jesse, too, had a smile on his face as he silently stood by and said:

"That is the same you brought me before."

"Yes, my lad, it is; but I've perfected this invention. There's no mistaking it now—it's original work. You see the heart, and the photograph to go inside. It may be that of your sweetheart; and if so, what more appropriate than that she should be in your heart! The idea will take like wild-fire; but though this is ingenious, that's not the whole of my invention. Wait a minute."

Obed began fumbling again in his large pocket, whilst Jesse took up the frame and turned it round, to examine it, as he said to Hoel:

"Mr. Diggings wants to take out a patent for this, and I've been trying to dissuade him from doing it; but I'm not knowing about this sort of handiwork."

"Yes, that's it," continued Obed. "You're a kind fellow; but you don't quite understand. Now look here, this is the gem of the whole." He now produced a penny button-hole glass, to which he had attached a long wire. "This will make me a name. By this wire I shall fasten this glass, and then the whole will be first-rate: a heart for affection, a flower for remembrance. You see, Jesse, my lad, that the flower may be forget-me-not, or pansy, or what not. This patent will soon be in every shop-window; it will make our fortune—Milly's and mine."

"I'm afraid, as you've fixed it now, it will be a little top-heavy," said Jesse, kneeling down and adjusting the glass. "Suppose we try putting it in the middle, there will be less chance of a misfortune to the patent—so; but wait a minute, the best plan will be for me to come and see you to-morrow after office work, and Milly and I can have a fixing-up consultation."

Obed Diggings took kindly to this suggestion, for evidently the unsympathetic attitude of the strange gentleman disturbed the flow of his ideas.

"Ah, well, yes; that would be best. I dare say you're busy to-night, Jesse. Thank you. I'll bring my specimen again. When we are rich, I'll not forget all you've done; nor more will Milly."

Jesse assisted at the packing-up, talking of ordinary matters to stop the flow of Obed's gratitude. Then, at last, with a bow, which was represented by a violent dip from his waist, Obed took his final leave.

Jesse watched him down the stairs, and when he returned to Mr. Fenner he had evidently forgotten his remark about the clergy, for his bright, eager look returned.

"You must forgive the old fellow, sir. He has seen better days, and he is not badly educated; besides, he's got a kind heart. You should see how tender he is to his poor crippled girl; but unfortunately he's got a terrible craze about inventions, instead of keeping to steady work. He learnt cabinet-making, and does still earn money in the trade; but what he earns one day he throws away the next on his ideas, and, sometimes, I'm afraid he takes to drink a little. It's best to humour him, it keeps him straighter. People live queer lives round here; but there's much kindness, and some hard heads in spite of poverty. The worst is, the men get hold of bad books, and they meet in some of their clubs and like to hear the sound of their own voices."

Hoel listened, and seemed suddenly to have plunged into an unknown depth of sea, the soundings of which he had never before taken. Even now the horrible odour of stale tobacco, left as a legacy by Obed, made him thankful that his present surroundings would not last long.

"But you, Vicary, you have read a good deal; you are—excuse me for saying it—a good deal above your neighbours. If I were in your place, I think I should lodge in more—well, a more congenial place."

Again Hoel felt that he was trying to avoid patronising his new acquaintance, and yet, how was he to help feeling superior

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to a man who had been saved from the workhouse by the charity of a gentleman?

"I like the place," answered Jesse, thoughtfully. "You see, even here, I have two fellow-creatures to whom I can speak of Rushbrook and Greystone; 'Liza, the girl, comes from off Mr. Eagle Bennison's estate, and Obed remembers climbing the great moors, which we call the Forest of Alder down there. I was down at the Home Farm, as a lad, and many a happy scramble I've had up to the five clumps. If I shut my eyes, I can see it all again, though I don't often talk about it; it brings on the 'mal du pays,' as the Swiss people say. I can't call it home-sickness, never having had a home; but the longing for those downs seems almost worse. As to Golden Sparrow Street, it's not as bad as it looks to you, and, till Symee comes and lives with me, I prefer staying where I've got friends."

Hoel felt he must go now; so, after a few words more about the required work, he shook hands and walked quickly away. On his way home he experienced a feeling very unusual to him—that of having failed to make the right impression on his hearer. Usually, he knew he said and did exactly the right thing; but this was in society. Certainly, Jesse Vicary could not be said to come under that head, and Hoel was conscious of not having been in harmony with him, and yet, in spite of everything, he was still attracted.

"It's a pity, however, he has not escaped the religious cant of the middle class. I suppose there is something soothing in feeling better than one's neighbours, or talking more about it; we cultivated people have the same feelings, I dare say, but cover it up with a substantial over-coat; still, if he has the cant, he has it in its least objectionable form, for he is quite natural with it. Strange that Kestell of Greystone should have made himself responsible for twins. When I next go and see the Heatons I must ask Miss Kestell whether the Vicarys were quite common people; I have heard of Nature's gentleman, but never met it before. But by the time I do go to Rushbrook again, I shall have forgotten all about the subject. Besides, why should I go? If I do, I shall most likely not see her. Kestell never asked me to call. I should imagine he only patronises men with titles or fortunes; I've got neither, and should not be acceptable. Good heavens! what an idea. As if I wished to become acceptable!"

Hoel was fond of a certain kind of psychological studies, and smiled as he noted his own inconsistency; but when one has gone far enough in "the advancement of learning" oneself, it is interesting, but by no means exhilarating, to note the waywardness of one's own moral nature, and to find that knowledge does not necessarily guide actions.

Hoel said to himself that evening, when once again seated in his sanctum: "I will wash my hands of them all. When Vicary has finished this job, I shall have done my duty by him, and the connection will naturally come to an end. He is original and clever; but, after all, he can never rise above a certain level. A genius comes but seldom in a century; and, somehow, a London clerkship soon smothers even originality. It's a happy providence, so as to keep them well chained to their desks. No, I was rather rash in going to see him; I shall be more careful in the future."

But Hoel Fenner was somewhat too positive that evening, that he would not yield to circumstances; circumstance plays so large a part in all our lives, that it is better to acknowledge at once that we have to take it into consideration with all our reckonings of the future. Otherwise, when we strike against it, we may canon off into a direction the very opposite to the one intended.

WHITECHAPEL TO WIMBLEDON.

The engine of a coming train, emerging from its underground track in a whirl of confused vapours, bears upon its front the legend: "Whitechapel and Wimbledon." What a parallel the words suggest! The crowded thoroughfares, the densely-packed courts and alleys, the grim spectres of want and crime, that are associated with the former, contrast sharply enough with decorous wealth in its suburban retreat; the shade, the broad thoroughfares, the well-hung carriages, the gay and well-cared-for children, with their ponies and dogs—these last better housed than the children of the slums. Yet the iron bond of the District Railway now unites the two places with half-hourly trains between them. And Jack the costermonger, weary with his vigils at the midnight markets of the Whitechapel Road, has fallen asleep over his empty baskets in the third-class carriage, and wakes not till he reaches the

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pleasant shades of Wimbledon Park. The railway company will obligingly take him back to Charing Cross, where he ought to have alighted for Covent Garden; and he might be grateful, but is not, for the chance that has been given him of a sight of green country, and a breath of fresh, pure air. But we have had other passengers during the transit—flower-girls with baskets of roses, with market-bunches of mignonette and ferns, which they are deftly arranging into bouquets and "button-holes" on their way. There are workmen with their bags of tools; plumbers bound for suburban residences, where something is wrong with gas or water; errand-boys with big wallets and well-thumbed memorandum-books; women with mysterious bundles. For when the great rush of morning hours is over, all kinds of little eddies and currents of small traffic set in. And so the train burrows beneath the great City with all the roar and traffic of its streets but faintly realised, and by Charing Cross and Westminster in the dim underground daylight; and South Kensington appears, with its note of museums and its memories of exhibitions, vanished like the snows of long ago; and then we come into a broad ray of bright sunshine at Earl's Court.

People, by the way, take Earl's Court for granted; and not one in a hundred thousand who travels that way troubles him or herself to ask who was the Earl, and where his Court, that gave a name to this region of commodious flats and eligible family mansions. Yet were it not for houses, and smoke, and steam, and other obstructions, we might get a glimpse of the hill with its pleasant shades,

> Thou hill whose brow the antique structures grace,
> Rear'd by bold chiefs of Warwick's noble race.

The antique structures being no other than Holland House, antique even in Addison's days, when he lived there with his wife, the widowed Countess of Warwick, and still unaltered in its outward features. And the bold chiefs referred to by the poet were not of the famous old line, but descended from a Chancellor Rich, according to that amiable biographer, Lord Campbell, "a very consistent character in all that was base and profligate." And the "chief," who gave his name to the court, was Henry, the first Earl of Holland, whose descendants inherited the title of Warwick, while between this Henry, Lord of the Hill at Kensington, and Henrietta, Lady of the Hill at Wimbledon, there was sufficient connection to make an excuse for thus lingering by the way.

Our train for Wimbledon has not afforded much time for this dissertation; but, taking a wide sweep, brings us round to Parson's Green, still green and pleasant, with relics here and there of the comely red-brick houses of other days. And at the Green we take in a contingent of cricketers in white flannels, with long bags containing their cricketing apparatus. The "Green" is going to play the "Fields," and there is quite a cheerful country note about this that reconciles one to the crowds of new houses that are springing up about old-fashioned Fulham, with its red roofs and grey church tower backed by the Bishop's green and shaded groves. The old Pottery is there still, anyhow, with its rows of pots upon the parapets. And the river, bank high, throws a bright gleam upon us; we catch a passing glimpse through a bewildering network of girders of new Putney Bridge, with its handsome granite arches. Then we have a new Putney, which differs not much in longitude from old Putney, but which discloses a new town with rows of streets and shops that promise to join hands with Wandsworth ere long, and then we are among green fields and suburban country, as we reach a station called Southfields, where our cricketers alight, received with hospitable shouts by their rivals.

So far all has been foreseen and familiar; but now the romance of the journey begins. It ends quickly, too. But there it is for the moment, a fragment of charming landscape, rich with all the associations of a chequered history.

The scene we behold from the windows of our underground railway-carriage is altogether a surprise, a lovely rural prospect, shut in with woods, and full of a quiet charm and dignity, with the repose and peace of a long-secluded ancestral domain.

In the foreground is a happy little lake, which shines like molten silver, and reflects the verdure, the trees, the azure of the skies. In the midst floats a swan, pure white. There is an old boat-house, and a skiff is moored by the shore. Above, with a sweep of green glade and tufted bank, rises a hill crowned with hanging woods, and a church spire rises from among the trees.

And this is Wimbledon Park, an undiscovered region to most Londoners; once a Royal seat, and now parcelled out in

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lots for building. New roads are to be seen here and there, "before they are made," and rows of houses, perhaps of shops also, will, in the course of time, shut out this beautiful prospect from the traveller from Whitechapel. All is not rural calm here even now. Further on, we get a glimpse of the valley of the Wandle, with a suspicion of factory chimneys and a view of long lines of dwellings stretching out into a smoky haze But again the country closes in upon us, and, at Wimbledon Park Station, a perfect stillness seems to reign.

At the very door of the station we strike into a rough path that leads up to the side of a hill. Two comely sunburnt dames are toiling up the slope, with little flaxen-haired children clinging to their skirts, and, at the top of the hill, is a wild little copse, where birds are twittering and children are scattered about busily gathering blackberries. Beyond the wood a newly-formed road leads along the crest of the hill, with a fine stretch of country spread out to view all round.

The Crystal Palace sparkles yonder in the sunshine, with the heights of Norwood darkened in the shadow of a cloud. There are Banstead Downs all in dreamy outline, and dim suggestions of more distant hills, with woods and pastures lying below. And so the prospect stretches out from Epsom away to Kingston. Yet we are still in Wimbledon Park. There were twelve hundred acres of it altogether, and we may wander for long distances without quitting its limits. Here and there we may come upon a noble oak that a Cecil, perhaps, dropped the original acorn of, gathered, mayhap, from one of those noble trees of Hatfield which, in Elizabeth's time, were in the height of their glory. And close by the noble oak you may find a board announcing building land for sale, with a suggestion of its adaptability for shop frontages. And, in a field beyond, the ploughman with his team is driving a furrow, where the plough-share glitters in the moist, clinging soil. There might be pheasants, you would think, in yonder copse, and the lay of the country suggests a fox stealing away beyond and hounds feathering among the bracken. And in the midst of it all appears the white steam of a train, and the underground train from Whitechapel steals past in the quiet, undemonstrative way it has acquired among the London streets.

As for this Wimbledon Park, which, if it has lost its seclusion, has anyhow become accessible to all the world, its history is mainly that of the Manor which formerly went with it. And that was from time immemorial the property of the Church of Canterbury, although some of its ancient customs seem to point to a time when its tenants may have "followed to the field some warlike lord." For there was a heriot at the death of a tenant, when his heirs must deliver up his best horse, saddle, bridle, spear, sword, boots, spurs, and armour. And those were not articles that an Archbishop should have coveted. Then, the fine that was paid by the heir for every fifteen acres was "one blacke sheepe or tenpence in money," and the black sheep has a very heathenish look about it. The custom, too, of Borough English prevailed in the Manor, that is to say, the youngest was heir instead of the eldest; and all these things have a pleasant archaic flavour about them, and go to show that our Wimbledon was settled by a different race and had different manners from the surrounding population.

But, except for these curious customs, there was little noteworthy in the history of Wimbledon during the tranquil rule of the ecclesiastics. When Cranmer transferred it to Henry the Eighth, in exchange for other lands, Wimbledon began to be noteworthy. Henry gave it to Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Wolsey's former protégé, who was a native of neighbouring Putney, and the son of a blacksmith, or, more probably, of an iron-master there; the Cromwells having, at that time, been persons of means and consideration in the neighbourhood. When Cromwell lost his estates and head, the manor reverted to the Crown, and was granted to Queen Catherine Parr for life. That life was not a long one, and, at Catherine's death, Queen Mary bestowed the estate on Cardinal Pole, who only survived his Royal kinswoman a few days. Then Queen Elizabeth had it, and sold the Manor House and Park to my Lord Keeper Hatton, one of the salient figures of that brilliant period. But Sir Christopher, having bought and built too largely, was obliged to part with Wimbledon Park to Sir Thomas Cecil, the eldest son of Lord Burleigh, of the sagacious nod, and afterwards Earl of Exeter. And in the old Manor House Cecil entertained Queen Elizabeth, who passed through on her way to Nonsuch Palace, near Ewell, when the churchwardens of Wimbledon expended twentypence on mending the wayes between the two places. The Earl

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of Exeter left the place to his third son, Edward Cecil, a soldier for many years in the wars in the Low Countries, who was rewarded for his not over brilliant services by the titles of Baron Putney and Viscount Wimbledon. He had the family talent for building and construction. Wimbledon House, in the Strand, was his, close to the mansion of his brother of Exeter, the fame of which is preserved in Exeter Hall, and opposite the house of his cousin of Salisbury, where are now Cecil and Salisbury Street. But Wimbledon House was destroyed by fire in its builder's lifetime, and seems to have left no trace.

Lord Wimbledon built a magnificent house on the site of his country manor—a house which resembled Hatfield in its general plan, but which was more fantastic and less dignified in general appearance. But many thought it a finer house than Nonsuch. Anyhow, it stood in a noble situation—perhaps the finest anywhere near London—approached by monumental flights of steps, in contrast with which the great gilt coaches, with their six horses apiece, which drew up before them, seemed like toy chariots drawn by mice.

But his lordship, dying, left daughters only, and the honours of Putney and Wimbledon became extinct. And the daughters, in 1639, sold the whole estate to Henry, Earl of Holland, and others, as trustees for Queen Henrietta Maria. The sum paid for Manor and estate was sixteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine pounds. The amount may be compared with the eighty-five thousand pounds given for the Park, without the Manor, in 1846. Yet, looking at the greater worth of money in the earlier period, the increase in value is less than one might expect. From that time Wimbledon Hall, as it was generally called, became a favourite resting-place with Henrietta and King Charles.

Everything about the house seems to have been kept in the most perfect order, under the Queen's own eye. The gardens were extensive, and beautifully kept, adorned with knots and flower-beds of quaint and curious devices; rich in all kinds of trees and shrubs; prolific in both fruit and flowers. There was a fine orangery, a maze, a wilderness, a vineyard, a fine banqueting-house in the garden, with great doors that, thrown open, revealed the whole pleasant prospect of artificial and natural beauties.

Within the house were fine galleries; noble saloons, panelled with oak or cedar; halls with marble pavements; fine chimney-pieces; everywhere gilding and carving; rich furniture, and hangings of Gobelins, and other tapestry; a music-room, with organs; noble staircases terminated in lofty turrets, from which could be seen a magnificent prospect all round — the towers of Westminster and Whitehall; great reaches of the silvery Thames; the hills of Kent and Surrey; Kensington, with its groves and gardens; and all the northern heights of London.

In this stately pleasure-house, the Queen was entirely at home. It was her house to herself, and Charles was there only as a guest. Among the handsome and splendidly-attired gentlemen, whom the Queen loved to have about her, one of the Queen's chief favourites was her treasurer and High Steward, Henry, Earl of Holland, the owner of that famous house at Kensington, which still bears his name. When the troubles of the Civil Wars came on, Lord Holland played a vacillating part. Now he was for the Parliament; now for the King; and was mistrusted and suspected on either hand. But when the King's cause was lost, and he a captive in the hands of his enemies, and the Queen an exile at the Court of France, vainly striving to move the crafty Mazarin to interfere, Lord Holland was appealed to as one who had been once the most favoured, trusted servant of the Queen. A scheme was on foot to deliver the King. The gentry of the southern counties were ready to rise in arms; encouraging accounts came in from all parts of the country. Lord Holland assumed the direction of the plan, and the secret threads of the conspiracy were drawn together at Wimbledon. There the Queen had still devoted servants, too humble, perhaps, to be suspected. These were French gardeners, who kept up a connection with their native country. The King was allowed to send orders as to the arrangements of the garden; and doubtless these missives had a secret meaning.

The rising broke out prematurely in Kent. Fairfax stormed Maidstone and drove the Royalists to cross the river into Essex, where they took possession of Colchester. Lord Holland mustered a thousand horsemen on Wimbledon Heath, with the Duke of Buckingham and other young nobles as his officers. But Cromwell's seasoned troopers were soon upon them. The Royalist cavalry were dispersed, and the last of them overtaken and captured

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at St. Neots, in Huntingdonshire, Lord Holland among the number. And a few months after the execution of the King, Lord Holland met his fate manfully enough, in white satin doublet and cap with silver lace, on the scaffold, in Palace Yard.

With this tragedy comes decadence upon Wimbledon Hall. Commissioners descended upon the place and surveyed it for sale; but even the stern Puritans seemed touched with its grace and beauty: "The site very pleasant; the rooms richly adorned, very commodious and fit for present use; the ayre sweet and open; the church and market near."

Presently the whole was sold, and shortly after General Lambert entered into possession. He, too, was a man of taste and refinement, with ambition that would make a palace of his new dwelling. But his star paled before that of Cromwell, and he consoled himself with the beautiful gardens, about which the memory of the Queen still lingered. He cultivated tulips and gillyflowers, anticipating more modern crazes. He was a skilful flower painter, too, and adorned the house with his canvases.

Then came the Restoration, and Henrietta was once more in possession of her old pleasure-house. But what restoration was there for one faded, worn, and weary with intrigues and disappointments? The place, with its memories, was almost hateful to her now, and she sold it to the Earl of Bristol.

After the Earl's death, Osborne, afterwards Duke of Leeds, bought the place, and his executors sold it to one Sir Theodore Janssen, a South Sea director. The man of wealth pulled down the mansion that Cecil had built and Queen Henrietta adorned, and began to build a new one. Then, in 1720, the bubble burst, and all the ruined gamblers fastened upon those who still had money, and the estates of the directors were confiscated by Act of Parliament.

Sarah of Marlborough bought the estate, and scattered to the four winds Janssen's plans and foundations. She built a house on the north side of the knoll, did not like it, and pulled it down. Built another on the south side; did not like that either, but let it stand; and finally bequeathed the whole estate to John Spencer, her grandson, whose descendants were ennobled as Earls Spencer. But Sarah's house was burnt down in 1785, and the site stood vacant till 1798, when the present existing house was built—an affair of no great architectural pretensions. In 1846 the Spencers sold the Park and Hall, but retained the Manor, of which Earl Spencer is still the lord.

Since then, Wimbledon Park has been gradually converted into building lots; but as this process has gone on gradually, and the new houses lie pretty well hidden by foliage in their own grounds, many of the most pleasing features of the old Park are still retained.

Where the Park ends the Common begins — that breezy common, still wild and unconventional, with thickets and dells, and wildernesses of bracken, while, from its broken edge, a sweet woodland prospect opens out. There is a fine stretch of heath all the way from Putney, and in the Bottom, where was once the "Bald-faced Stag"—now nursery ground—stood the gibbet, where once dangled the bones of the famous Jerry Abershaw, the terror of travellers along the well-worn Kingston Road. And then we have the old windmill, still retained as a picturesque accessory, although relieved from active service; and close by is the tall flagstaff which serves as a reminder of the volunteer camp, and of the cottage lately its headquarters. The butts, too, have a solemn and gloomy aspect in the distance, as if they were so many entrenchments of the giants of old. It is this Putney side of the heath that was once a favourite scene for duels. Here the Duke of York met Colonel Lennox in 1789. The Duke had grossly insulted the Colonel on the Guards' parade, and refused to retract, but intimated that he waived his immunities as Royal Prince and commanding officer. The stout Duke, in his brown coat, received the fire of Colonel Lennox, but would not return it. The Colonel might blaze away at him if he pleased, but the Duke would not throw away a word or a bullet upon him. And when the Colonel declined to make a target of his Royal antagonist, the Duke marched contemptuously away. The Colonel lived to be Duke of Richmond, and died at last, when Governor-General of Canada, of the bite of a little pet dog.

Then Pitt and Tierney fought a duel here, close to where then stood Jerry Abershaw's gibbet. It was fought on a Sunday, too, a fact which shocked the proprieties of the time. Then, in 1807, Sir Francis Burdett met John Paull, when both were slightly wounded. Still more noted was the duel between Castle-

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reagh and Canning, who fought out a Cabinet quarrel on the heath near Putney, when Canning received a trifling wound. More desperate was the encounter between George Payne and Mr. Clarke in 1810, the latter avenging his sister's honour, and lodging a bullet in the body of her seducer, of which wound unhappy Mr. Payne died two days after at the "Red Lion" Inn.

In aristocratic England to kill one's friend in a duel had always been regarded as an exclusive caste privilege; and when tradespeople affected to have notions of honour, it was felt that it was time for gentlemen to abstain from an unfashionable practice. And thus the duel of Elliot and Mirfin, the latter a draper, fought on Wimbledon Heath in 1838, did much to bring duelling into disrepute. Yet, in the following year, an old-fashioned duel was fought between the Marquis of Londonderry and Henry Grattan; and in 1840 a distinguished exile, Louis Napoléon, with Count D'Orsay as his second, appeared upon the ground to meet Count Léon in mortal combat. But some one had sent for the police. The duel was stopped, and the intending combatants bound over to keep the peace. The last serious duel fought upon this classic spot was between the Earl of Cardigan and Captain Harvey Tuckett, arising out of the former's overbearing tyranny as commanding officer of the Eleventh Hussars. The Captain was seriously wounded, and Lord Cardigan was put on his trial, but escaped by a flaw in the indictment, and was warmly congratulated thereupon by Lord Denman, the presiding Judge.

And now, to leave the scene of these single combats, and to seek the relics of ancient warfare, we must make our way to "Cæsar's Camp," not very easy to be found by a casual pedestrian. First of all, in an ordinary way, Wimbledon Common is a rather lonely spot. You may descry in the distance a party of golf-players with their clubs and irons and attendant caddies. But they are soon out of sight in pursuit of the little white balls. And a pair of lovers, on horseback, clearly are unapproachable. An elderly gentleman, calmly reading in the midst of solitude, whose newspaper has shone as a bright spot in the dun-coloured heath, has heard of Cæsar's Camp, and vaguely declares it is "somewhere over there." A workman, passing across the scene, pauses to reply: "Cæsar's Camp—Camp? Bless you, that's all over now!" A veteran, smoking his pipe in a hollow, has no knowledge of Cæsar's Camp; but there is Cæsar's Well right over yonder; and the well is not far from the Camp, as the big ordnance plan, previously consulted, has shown. A little girl, in charge of a still smaller infant, proves the most intelligent guide. "The well's right behind the Queen's butt;" and that is a sufficiently good landmark, being the biggest and most massive of all those respectable earthworks.

And, indeed, the well is a place of general resort, and attracts little knots of pilgrims from all sides, who picnic in the little thicket about it, and quench their thirst in the pellucid well. It is a spring bright, and clear, and strong, and supplies a little burn that runs along the dell. There is no brighter, sunnier spot anywhere than this dell, and, looked at from below, it appears as a horseshoe-shaped hollow, with a regular, defined edge, that probably represents the defensive bank of earth that once surrounded it. It is the very place for the refuge of a pastoral tribe, with a copious spring at the head of it, defended by woods and morasses, and answering exactly, as it seems, to Cæsar's description of the "capital town of Cassivellaunus." Here ran the little burn between the booths and huts of the Britons; and here, perhaps, may Cæsar have rested after the fight, weary and thirsty with the toil of the day, while some eager soldier brought him a cup of water from the crystal spring.

It is certainly curious that while, by common consent, the name of Cæsar is applied to the well, yet that it is not locally known in connection with the fine circular entrenchment that lies some little distance to the westward of the well. For that people call the Rounds, a name appropriate enough, as it consists of two great concentric banks of earth, with a hollow way between. If intended for a defensive camp, it is difficult to see the purpose of the outer rampart, which, unprotected by any ditch, seems rather an advantage than an obstacle to an assailant. But it may not have been a camp at all, but a temple, a place of sacrifice, and of assemblage too. Whatever its object may have been, the site of the entrenchment is a fine one. It seems to be the most commanding point in the neighbourhood, and from its ramparts a fine and extensive view is to be had of the country round about, with towns and villages scattered about, and common,

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heaths, and woods, and rough, wild hills that stretch to the far horizon. The interior of the camp is rough, broken ground, with thorn-bushes growing here and there. The plough has been at work upon it, and the symmetry of its contour has vanished. Vanished, too, has the fine circle of trees, that gave a grateful shade, and added grace and dignity to the scene. Their stumps only remain as a memorial of those who perpetrated the deed of destruction.

Happily, the old entrenchment has characteristics quite opposite to those of Avernus. That is, it is difficult to get there, but very easy to find the way back again. Indeed, the track seems a well-frequented one, a pleasant way under an avenue of young trees, past a little outlying settlement, called West Place, where there is a great show of washing and hanging out to dry, and so directly into the High Street of Wimbledon, which one would like to think is only a younger descendant of that Wibbandun about which the men of Kent and the West Saxons fought so fiercely lang syne.

But old Wimbledon is almost swallowed up in new buildings and streets, and has quite the air of Regent Street, with handsome shops, and great displays in their windows. Yet old Wimbledon House seems still to be standing in its fine timbered grounds, where Monsieur de Calonne once lived, and the Prince de Condé after him, exiled from Chantilly. Here, too, Marryat, the novelist, was reared; and we may suppose that Mr. Midshipman Easy once hailed from this pleasant Surrey village. And happily the way is all down hill, and brings us swiftly to the station, where the signal lights are gleaming against the soft evening sky, and a train is waiting to depart, bearing the label—Whitechapel!

AT PEEL.

GATHER it up from the jagged rocks that fringe the ancient keep,
The thing, but yesterday a man, now a toy for the angry deep;
Tossed from Atlantic rollers, to the rush of the Irish waves,
Drifting by Mona's frowning coasts to the haven of her caves.

Gather him up. The dumb, dead lips will speak to us never more;
The wide blue eyes no longer scan the signs of sea and shore;
The strong young hands hang listlessly among the seaweeds brown.
Gather him up, and bear him slow, through the quaint old fishing town.

Did he come from a hut 'mid green Erin's hills, or a cot among Highland snows,
Or a homestead high on the Yorkshire coast, where the wild nor'easter blows,
Or do they mourn by a Norway fiord for the sailor who went away,
To lie, all nameless and unowned, 'mid the rocks of Peel to-day?

There are none to tell; and we who love the sweet, sad seaboard know
Such death and doom come oft enough, as the long years come and go.
Carry him—somebody's darling—with fitting care and rite
To his rest on St. Patrick's Island—to his rest 'mid its ruined might.

Make his grave in the turf, which centuries have woven so soft and green,
Where the ruddy arches still are left, though the sunbeams glint between;
Where, fourteen hundred years ago, the great Saint's footsteps trod
When, to the wild Manx islanders, he brought the Word of God.

Will the nameless fishermen's spirits come on some soft midnight hour,
On the Holy Eve when, legend says, souls have such mystic power,
And with Saints, and Bishops, and Warriors stern, and Scandinavian Kings,
See all the wonderful change and chance that passes o'er earthly things?

Musing, where still St. Germain's Church rules his Cathedral Isle,
Where the "Northern Wizard's" spell endures the world he made to style;
While the sea-birds swoop, and, the brown sails flit over the clear blue wave,
One thinks, "Had ever the wandering Dead so fair or so strange a grave?"

TWO DAYS IN CANTON.

FIRST DAY.

THE Island of Hongkong is lying far behind us. We left, at eight o'clock this morning, its lovely harbour, with the straggling town of Victoria, sweltering in the heat, shut out from the sea-breeze by the towering wall of rock that, rising abruptly, culminates in the Peak two thousand feet above. We have threaded the dangerous channels through the countless islands in the mouth of the Pearl River, and are now steaming swiftly up the stream, in the good ship "Hankow"—every dip of the ponderous walking-beam overhead sending us farther and farther into the interior of this mysterious land of China.

We have passed the famous Bogue Forts—raised by German engineers to close the passage—and we wondered if these engineers had an eye to future possibilities, a time when the black eagle flag might have to be carried up the river as the banner of an enemy. Admirably placed, mounting many heavy guns, the Forts dominate the whole of the deep channel;

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but, while the larger door for the cat is closed, the small door for the kitten is left open, and it would appear perfectly easy for small, swift launches and torpedo-boats to sneak in safety round the flanks and land men and machine-guns on the commanding heights beyond, against fire from which there appears to be no protection.

In two places on our passage we passed through the rows of piles by which the river was closed in the late French war. Sufficient openings have been made for the daylight passage of ships; but night work is difficult and dangerous with the strong tideway and the inferior lighting of the barriers.

Next in sight appeared our first pagoda —dream of our childhood! Oh! how the glass shades of many a bygone lodging came back to memory, each with its delicate ivory carving, rising tier on tier, not forgetting the bells at the corners, nor the card at the bottom requesting us not to touch! This last admonition is faithfully observed by the Chinese themselves. All but one of those we saw were neglected and falling to decay. One cause of decay was curious; when first the Whampoa Pagoda came in sight our glasses were busy examining it, and an appearance at the top puzzled us completely; after many a futile guess, we found, on near approach, a very large tree growing on the far side of the pagoda, its roots embedded in the masonry a hundred and forty feet from the ground. Every roof, in every pagoda we saw that day, had its trees and bushes, some large, some small; but all originally springing from seeds brought by birds. The particular tree noticed above must have had a trunk some eighteen inches thick.

The river at Whampoa divides into many channels, forming islands from ten to fifty acres in extent, and flat as a billiard-table. The soil is only a few inches higher than the surface of the stream at high water, and every square inch is under cultivation. Rice, rice, rice, wherever the eye can rest.

Life on the river now becomes busy; boats, large and small, of every shape and, apparently, in every stage of decay, ply up and down, across and across the stream, now struggling to secure good luck by crossing our bows, now appearing to sink bodily under the swell raised by our passage. The spectator feels a vague sense of pity for some of these boats, so overladen are they; however, their owners know their capabilities, and do not seem to mind a little more or less water coming in over the gunwales, which, in many cases, are seemingly flush with the river; indeed, in several boats we saw the crew baling water, not out of, but into, their crazy craft. A curious method of propulsion now appeared. A long, low barge, crammed and packed with passengers, was driven by a rude stern paddle-wheel, worked by long levers, on which three rows of four men each kept up a rhythmical tread, and a very fair speed resulted. It was a fine instance of economising space, for, with the number of passengers carried, there would be no room for oars.

We now passed the busy little town of Whampoa, with steamers and many sailing ships lying off, most of the vessels flying the English ensign, though Germany was represented by a smart little man-of-war, looking so bright and trim among the workaday craft around. The Chinese have a Naval depôt and Torpedo-yard here, and very much in earnest looked the ten or twelve torpedo-boats lying at anchor, each floating the curious pointed Imperial flag — yellow, with a dragon device in black. The Torpedo School is under German officers at present; but the time is quickly coming when China will be satisfied with her own powers in naval and military matters, and will dismiss her schoolmasters; just as Japan is now building and running her own railways, on American ideas, learnt from her now-dismissed instructors.

At last, in the distance ahead, looms up a big and familiar-looking building. Canton is in sight. Canton, the Chinese southern capital, with a population variously estimated at from one to four millions of people, Chinese among other Chinese towns, the home of Conservatism, where the first words the children learn to lisp are "Foreign Devil," and where the foreigner is despised as a barbarian; and yet the first building visible, the only one, in fact, except a far-away pagoda, is the Roman Catholic Cathedral. It is not built away among the foreign houses in the little English settlement, cut off from the rest of the town, but away in the heart of the busy city itself — miles from a friendly house—standing like a missionary alone in a heathen crowd.

If there were boats at Whampoa, what shall we say to the state of the river at Canton? That it is as crowded as Cannon Street? as London Bridge? More so;

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for while the channel itself is covered with passing craft, the banks are lined with rank upon rank, row upon row, literally street upon street of boats which are the home of their crews. An anxious time must be daily passed by the captain of this huge river-ship, as he threads his way through the crowd. To-day, as we approach the wharf, a strong tide is running up, and many a narrow escape is recorded as, urged by strong language, almost as much as by her paddles, the ship surges near enough for the shore-lines to be thrown, and we are warped slowly to the resting-place.

The river folk are taciturn; but on shore the Oriental love of jabber holds its own, as noise enough to deafen one arises from our seven hundred Chinese passengers—till now cooped on the lower deck—as they emerge and are greeted by a similar crowd beyond the barrier. At a European port, this crowd would be one of idlers drawn by curiosity; but idlers are unknown here. The Chinaman is a busy man through all the daylight hours for seven days a week. From dawn to dark his work goes on; his very children—who become bread-winners before they can fairly talk — use their father's implements as playthings, and where our bairns would play at keeping shop, the baby Chinaman, with block of wood and heavy chopper, goes through the motions of splitting firewood. One day he will make a splinter, and from that day forth becomes a worker. This business of splitting firewood is the daily task of at least one member of a family, in a town where no coal is burnt; and when baby can begin to chop, big brother will help his father at his trade.

No, the crowd beyond the barrier are on business, each eager to set to work with his partner just arrived, and grudging the time before they can discuss it. And now through the crowd comes quietly a privileged man, with something of a Western look upon his Oriental features. He is the guide, Ah Cum, who, for many years, has daily met the boat to take the foreign visitors round the town. His English is curious, but fluent, picked up in this manner from many a globe explorer; and, in the midst of a solemn description of god or temple, a quaint Americanism or bit of English slang will be used with an earnestness that is touching. After arranging to return to the ship for dinner and the night—for she will stay over the next day, Sunday—we confide our destinies to Ah Cum, and enter the capital of the Kwang-Tung.

Pushing through the swarming crowd we enter sedan-chairs, and, borne by shrieking coolies, plunge into the town. Is this a street, or a chink that leads to one? Barely five feet wide, the open venetians of the upper storey touching, the sky above hidden by make-shift awnings of boards, cloths, mats, paper, anything that will cast a shade—dark as Erebus—surely it is a chink. We turn to the right with difficulty, as the long chairs require skilful manœuvring round the corner. Again a chink, we turn again; again a chink; and we realise that the streets we had heard called narrow are very narrow indeed. In no instance did we find a street ten feet wide, and most were far less; and each filled with a yelling, jostling crowd of busy men. As in London city, in business hours, women were conspicuous by their absence. Children, several; women, one or two; men, in millions we appeared to meet.

We now turn into a clearer, brighter, but no wider street, where the shops betoken a richer quarter, and we examine it curiously. The awnings overhead are now chiefly mats and canvas. There is no attempt at fit or uniformity, each householder providing his own at his own sweet will. Below these hang the clothing and family linen of those living above the shops. Perhaps the air is purer in the street, and they are hung to ventilate; then, alas for the air in the house!

The houses are but a single storey high, so the clothes hang pretty low; but below these again hang the gaily-coloured signs of the shopmen: boards some eight inches wide and ten feet long—scarlet, green, umber, sienna — every colour is there except blue, the red predominating. These boards, which hang by one end about a foot from the houses, bear each a perpendicular row of large Chinese characters, carved or painted, and, while adding local colour, they narrow the perspective of the street. The pavement is of granite blocks, stretched across from house to house, and slightly arched in the centre. Drainage there is none; what liquid is thrown from the shops or the rooms above evaporates in the stifling heat, and nothing but the smell remains. And the smell, what does that matter? Would introducing a pink into an acre of roses affect the nostrils? Everything in every place in Canton smells, and smells vilely; and yet so great is the

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variety that none remains long enough to annoy, unless you stand still.

Lighting cigars to add another and pleasanter scent to help us while we wait, let us look at the shops like veritable country cousins. We dutifully begin, when Ah Cum dismounts with a twinkle in his eye.

"You know what that is?" he chuckles, pointing to a frying, frizzling mess in an open pan, apparently cooking by the heat of the sun, but really heated by a round furnace built into the counter. We simper vaguely, but see nothing unusual. "That cat," he goes on with a broad smile.

Hanging round the shop front are the trussed bodies of other cats; and very funny they look: the white, naked bodies decked, like the poulterer's pheasants at home, each with its furry tail—tabby, tortoiseshell, or black, to say that here the veritable cat, and not the inferior rabbit is for sale. For all that, very few cats are eaten, and this shop is shown as a curiosity, though here and there through the town we catch a glimpse of furry tails, or, more commonly, hairy ones, where the dog is being made useful after death.

Next door, we have a shop for the sale of rice-paper drawings. Division of labour here comes into play, and we see that the delicate pictures are not each the loving work of an artist, as we had supposed, but copies made against time. A finished picture is taken, five or six transparent sheets laid over and quickly traced in fine pencil, and passed on by the tracer, one to the boy with scarlet, another to the boy with blue, and so on; the head only being left to be painted by the solemn, round-spectacled old gentleman in the corner, whose moustache betrays the fact that he is a grandfather. We buy a set of a dozen scenes in prison for about half-a-crown, and pass on.

"See that blue," says Ah Cum, as we enter another shop, pointing to a dull blue of curious tint, being inserted as enamel into delicate, gold filagree jewellery. "Know what that is?" Of course we don't know; and Ah Cum proceeds to explain by pulling open a drawer, as if the place belonged to him, and producing a handful of feathers. "That kingfisher feather." The boy in the corner is cutting the feathers into shreds, each little heap representing a different tint, while the workman takes these little bits and fixes them with gum. The work is tawdry, and like inferior enamel; but for the curiosity we select some small pieces, and move on.

How the people seem to enjoy themselves in those shops that are not workshops! Look at that fat old fellow in the boot-store, with the fat-soled slippers round him. Leaning back, with his stool at an angle of forty-five degrees, his round shoulders quivering like a jelly against the wall, he is laughing and chatting with a friend, who talks from the street. Naked to the waist, and fanning his paunchy form, he looks the picture of content. Why! the next man is like him; so is the next; so is the next. They are all shoemakers, it being "China custom" for trades to cluster in this fashion. Evidently, shoes are fattening. No, there's a jeweller just as fat and jolly. Sell? They don't care! Give their terms? "All litee, Chin-Chin." Refuse their terms? "All litee—maskee, Chin-Chin." Take it or leave it, we're quite happy, they seem to say. And yet, if he wants to deal, it would be hard to find an acuter bargainer.

The next shop we stare at in our well-bred way is a barber's. China must be the paradise of hairdressers, for at least once a day each respectable man must have his head shaved. Look at that fellow now, leaning over the brass basin on the peculiar green and scarlet stand, of a form that all these barbers affect. He has had his queue unplaited, and washed, and now the barber is combing it out. Glossy, black, rather coarse, but long and abundant—it must be five feet long, at least. Now it is plaited, and the coiffure is complete. First, the forehead has been shaved to a line just behind the ears; the neck has been shaved to the swell of the head; and then the remaining hair has been plaited in three strands, resulting in a so-called "pig-tail"—or, as a Chinaman expresses it, a tress—as thick as your wrist where it leaves the head, tapering to nothing, and finished off with a tassel of black-silk ribbons, that reach within a few inches of the ground. He is very proud of his tail, is your Chinaman, and to touch it is to insult him, badge of servitude though it is, forced upon his ancestors two hundred years ago by their Manchu conquerors. We shall find by-and-by the pig-tail put to a use its wearer hardly bargained for—but that must come at its proper time.

Ah Cum now thinks we have seen enough shops, and we are by no means sorry to escape the crowd that has gathered. The crowd do not look much at us, but take

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the most vivid interest in things we look at. We stop to inspect one of the ordinary sign-boards. It probably says that "Hing Loong has for sale tables, chairs, and all kinds of wooden things;" but from the grave and reverential way in which every busy man passing stops and reads it over and over again, merely because we look at it, it might be a heavenly message flashed out for the comfort of this celestial people. We take our chairs, our bearers again shrieking and yelling as they jostle through the throng; and as we pass we notice that the shops, all open to the street, and innocent of door or window, change their character, and making, rather than selling, is the business of the street. Here, on the left, is a weaver's loom. It is primitive, but by no means simple. One man sits below, throwing the shuttle and working the warp thread with enormous pedals; overhead another man, playing, it would seem, an elaborate harp formed of delicate silk strings, catching unerringly the threads which form the pattern, the whole affair grating and groaning, but every movement in exact time like so much clock-work.

Here, on the right, is a jade-working shed, where the valuable stone, almost priceless when in large lumps of good colour, is cut and polished by half-naked boys in a room a not-fastidious dog would avoid. We ask the price of a small cylinder, the size of a silk-reel, hear that it is forty dollars, and pass on. We stop at a low, dirty-looking room, hung with filthy clothes, where three coolies are playing their eternal game of "how many fingers do I hold up" for drinks round, and are told that there the best ivory-carving in Canton is produced. A cadaverous-looking man in the corner is pulled awake by Ah Cum, and unlocking a crazy door in an antediluvian press, just visible through its dust, produces some of those delicately-carved card-cases, and such like things, which these men produce with the most unpromising tools. Bits of sharpened wire and patience are the ivory-carver's stock in trade. We look at some of those marvels of patient work, the hollow concentric balls—the one now in hand has thirteen, one inside the other—and pass on, for Ah Cum is impatient to show us the next thing on his programme, The Temple of Five Hundred Deities.

We have been warned not to expect architectural beauties in Canton; and lo! a common, barn-like building, with a common, barn-like door, flanked by two dilapidated Buddhist idols, is unlocked by an old crone who keeps poultry in the recess where stand the idols, and we are ushered directly into the temple. It is for all the world like a temporary museum; a long, central room, with others crossing it at right angles, low, dirty, lighted from above by a continuous cobweb-covered skylight; no altar, no place for worshippers, it is simply a disreputable barn, in which are stored the five hundred and three figures which deserve a fitter habitation. All the figures in this Chinese temple are different in action, aspect, and meaning. There they sit, row upon row, life-sized, natural, a solemn silence round. Before each is smouldering incense, sending fragrant smoke into the air. We speak in hushed whispers together. Ah Cum, who has been bowing reverently before his own particular "joss," steals back, and with an air of reverence, whispers: "Bally fine, ain't it?" He meant well; but it was incongruous, and we laughed.

Examined in detail, the figures are more interesting and less solemn. Here is a fat, cheery old soul, with five chubby children in his lap; his big toe is worn away by the kisses of matrons wishing a similar family. There is a wrinkled ascetic with an arm ten feet long, up-stretched to commemorate the action of Kwa-Ping-To, as he held the moon in the heavens in her hour of danger. Here is a portrait-model of Marco Polo, said to have been carved at the date of his sojourn in China. It is pitiable to see these beautifully-carved figures, some full of grace or dignity, covered an inch thick in dust, and looked at only by careless tourists. We leave the place rather subdued, and work our way back to the ship.

A capital dinner, followed by an astronomical chat with genial Captain Lloyd, who is interested in watching the satellites of Jupiter, brings the time round for our evening jaunt, and punctually to her time appears our "slipper-boat." We are rowed over the moonlit river by three comely Chinese lasses, and steered by a fourth, all in fits of laughter, but with eyes alert for every passing boat; and grandly they manage the handy little "slipper," until a sweep from the steering oar brings us alongside the first of the flower-boats.

Flower-boat is a pretty term; but a more explicit one would be, floating restaurant. In this first one a dinner is being prepared for a rich Chinaman and

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his friends; the tables covered with sweetmeats of every colour, gaudy china, and flowers. Flowers everywhere—on roof, walls, seats; and among them hang, a discordant note in the harmony of colour, glass globular mirrors, such as hang in gin-palaces at home, red, blue, crimson, white, wherever room can be found. The whole is lighted by numberless cheap petroleum lamps, with white shades, which are imported to China by the million. Incongruity is here, as it always is in China—snowy linen, sweet flowers, brilliant lights on one hand, and on the other, dirty, half-clad, cigarette-smoking pirates, spitting, yawning, odorous. These are the waiters resting before the company arrives.

We embark rather than land, to walk through this floating village. Each boat is fastened to its neighbour as they lie side by side, and a plank road runs in front of the bows wide enough for a busy crowd to pass, and for tables to be placed, where, at this hour, sit and jabber, and drink and smoke, a filthy crowd of Chinamen, each in the clothes he has worked in all day. At each of the many tables sit, also, girls—painted, rouged as a Chinawoman only rouges, till they look like pretty dolls. Pretty, very pretty, some, but emotionless; talked to, but not replying — very weary look these Chinese singing-girls. By a merciful chance there was no singing while we were there—we have heard it before, Chinese singing; so have dwellers in London, who hear it rising nightly from house-top and back-yard. We walk through half a mile of this floating village. After a hard day's work, a man will come here, sit at his ease, drink samshu, look at, perhaps even talk to, one of the pretty dolls for half an hour, yawn, and then go back to the land, to gamble, very likely, until morning in one of the many dens.

On reaching the ship again, we are glad to turn in, after a fatiguing day, and we pass a restless night with the mosquitoes, most of the latter being Canton-bred; but some having stuck to the ship during her ninety-mile trip up the Pearl River.

SHALL I HELP THE MISSIONARIES?

ALL of us are called on to do so some time or other. I hear that in London suburbs interesting young ladies carry about cards, and ask for pence, as school children used to do in West Cornwall. There it was a regular trade: "Please, m'm, give me a penny for the missionaries." We gave, though we knew the money went in "Tom Trot." At any rate, we were promoting native industry.

A delightsome little land that was; how could I ever leave it? It was the men who went out of the East that were the wise ones. Arcadia it would have been, but that there were so few sheep; and they, with fore and hind legs "spanned" that they might not cross the stone hedges. Everybody piped in Arcadia, and everybody sings in West Cornwall. Often, as I walked, half asleep, across from the town whose arms are "St. John's head in a charger," I could hear, mingling with the thud of the all-night-going "stamps," "When shepherds watched . . . and gloowry, and gloowry shun around." It was a "corps" of little mine-boys, sheltering behind an old wall, and practising carols a month or two before the time; and then I woke up and knew that I was nearing home.

Arcadia? Why, I have ridden out late on Saint John's Eve to a hill-side, six Cornish miles off—there's no night there—to watch the Baal-fires. Then, making for one of them, I have found the whole "tenement" (hamlet) solemnly walking round, hand-in-hand, and, dismounting, have renewed a still older custom, which they had forgotten, by leading my pony round too, and even persuading him to jump across.

You never grow old in a climate where summer is never scorching, while in winter it is almost always "tender weather." Why, when, in the siege of Paris year, and once or twice after, we had real cold and deep snow, they did not know what to make of it; and, not from idleness, but from want of use, they left our one high-road blocked for a fortnight, Her Majesty's mails being brought across the fields by a walking post. I do not know how long the barrier would have lasted, had not at last three waggons from our little foundry made a dash at and broken it through.

Arcadia it is in all save the jobbing in mine shares; and this they learnt from the "tin-ring," that execrable knot of Jews and London Germans who set the prices just contrary to the interest of miners, and "captains," and managers, and shareholders. Why not, argued Arcadia, carry the war into the enemy's country? And so, whenever "tin was up," an old mine or two was started into life, to the extent of

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printing prospectuses, patching up an old "whim," and, alas, now and then "salting" the ground with a few samples of ore to catch the eye of the Londoner on the look-out for investments.

But, missions. Yes, Arcadia believed in missions. In religion we were a happy family: the Church and three kinds of Methodists. I was the parson—the only man in the parish, I used to tell them, who could afford to be honest. That was always my plea against disestablishment. It was worth while to have some one who, being independent of class-leaders (mostly mine captains), and circuit stewards (mine pursers), and deacons, could afford to say that it was a burning shame for men to go underground with the constant chance of losing life or limb, and the almost certainty of getting "miners' complaint," for less wage than a pound a week. They smiled, but winced; for it was true. So sure as tin "went down," there came a revival at all the chapels, to foster that "other-worldliness" wherein lies the strength of "tin-rings" and other capitalist abominations. Their preachers' texts might well have been: "What's the use of this world's silver and gold? Leave them to the rich, who, in this life, receive their consolation. Never mind, you make your title safe; you get a first-class ticket to the realms of glory."

That was the principle. Alas, it underlies a good deal of so-called religion, and has always done so.

But in missions we all worked together; they were our chief diversion; the "deputations" were our Grossmiths, our Corney Grains. My dissenting brethren came to my meetings, and I went to theirs. The deputations were mostly returned missionaries, very able men; one was the great authority on the Tonga language, and strengthened my belief in "the sunken Continent of Lemuria," by telling me that Malagese (the Madagascar tongue) has very strong affinities with that of Tonga.

In church our meetings were always very decorous, and the ministers yielded to the "genius loci." I remember the startling gravity with which one, usually a rattling good fellow, told out of my pulpit how he was in a West African town at the time of the "great customs"—the King being dead. He was resting on the shady side of the big square, when "the messenger of death" came by, running and leaping; but, seeing he was a white man, turned aside, and caught sight of a poor girl, who, tray of fruit on her head, had just come in from the country. "Before she knew who it was, the monster had sidled up to her, and had shorn off her head into his ghastly basket." You may fancy the thrill that went through us.

Equally thrilling was the experience of another missionary, who knew South Africa. "Cape smoke," he said, "was ruining the native body and soul. The chiefs protested against it. He knew one who had travelled hundreds of miles to beg the Cape-Town statesmen to stop the drink traffic. Wherever a canteen was once set up, there it has remained, though the troops for whom it catered have long ago gone home. The mischief is most seen at a native wedding. When I first went out, they used to drink Kaffir beer, any quantity of it; and it made them pleasant and good-tempered. I've ridden by and seen them. But before I left the country, the fashion was to order up a dozen or so of Cape smoke, and for all to get mad drunk. And then the scenes that went on—the brutality, the fighting, not seldom the killing and wounding—it was shocking."

That was the sort of thing at Church meetings. At their own they preferred broad farce:

"How did you like it, Eliza Jane?"

"Lor', mum, it was better than the play at last Corpus Christi fair!"

I was there—not at the fair, but at the meeting—and I can well believe the girl was right. That "deputation" was screaming fun. Australia had been his labour-field; and one of his journeys he thus described: "You see, we often have long journeys—take the whole day at it. When I was a bachelor, I used to ride; but after I got married my wife wanted to come, too. And our first journey she had a sickener. We had driven that way three days before, and there was a tiny brook, like what you call Nancherrow River. Well, there had been rain somewhere, and when we got to the place, in coming back, lo and behold, it was a big river. I drove on as if there was nothing in front, though she screamed out: 'Tom, Tom! do stop.' And when I still went on, she cried: 'No, Tom. Nothing shall take me through that.' And out my lady jumped over the back of the cart, and flopped down on the sand. But when she saw me cross, and the water not much over the horse's knees, she began a different note: 'Tom, Tom, do come back! You can't be so cruel. You'll not leave me to die in the wilderness, will

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you?' But I stood out stiffly. 'I can't come across again,' says I; 'the horse won't stand it three times. You'll have to get over how you can.' So she began to cry; and by good luck—for I was really frightened to drive back—there, not far up, was a dead gum-tree leaning over the water-course. 'Get into the tree,' says I, 'and walk along.' 'I can't,' says she. 'I should slip over, I'm sure I should. Oh, Tom, Tom! do you want to drown me?' 'Well, if you can't step it, get astraddle, and work your way along.' And she did. You know those trees have no boughs for a long way up. And she was clear of the water. I stuck my feet out wide in the sand, held up my arms, and, 'Now, drop,' says I; and I caught her. And, would you believe it? she's never refused to cross a river since!"

And with stories like that he kept us going for full an hour. No wonder we all went in largely for missionary meetings, for we got a deal of fun out of them, as people in that far-off corner of England were bound to do. And the missionaries I have spoken of had been doing an undoubtedly good work. It is well that the hateful "customs" of the West Coast should be exposed; it is well that the spirit-merchant—a worse foe to native progress than even the witch-doctor who "smells out" those who have stolen the chief's favourite cow—should not have it all his own way; and it is well that a man of some culture and abundant high spirits should go round and cheer those who are moping under the loneliness of a bush-farmer's life. Even missions like Bishop Hannington's and Mr. Ashe's do good, though not as missions. Can it do good to fling pearls before worse than swine? To "preach" to a black Nero who would not listen to the Christian mysteries except they were turned into a drunken jest? That is what one asks, as one reads in Mr. Ashe the revolting story of Mtesa, King of Uganda. I do not think Saint Paul ever went through what Bishop Hannington did. The political persecutions, cruel as the working of a machine, did not begin till much later. Till madman Nero charged the Christians with setting Rome on fire, Paul only suffered from the Jews; and the magistrates wouldn't let them do very much. Why, the people of Lesser Asia were as gentle and as receptive as the old Irish were when Patrick came, or as the Peruvians were when they thought the Spaniards were gods upon earth. Those black fellows are a different sort. "Images of God, carved in ebony," says old Fuller. Very little of God, I fancy, in a fellow like Mtesa. Yet, even to these, missions do good, because they throw light on them; because they may by-and-by lead some, when we are not in such haste to get rich, to go out with a band of heroes, and put down "great customs," and abolish such Kings as Mtesa. That is how the old knights-errant did; and they it was who prevented Europe, in the dark ages, from being full of white Mtesas, monsters of revolting cruelty, and from having its "great customs" and similar abominations—worse even than the gladiators' shows at heathen Roman funerals. Even in Central Africa, therefore, missions do good by bringing evils to light, and by stirring up philanthropists, like the King of the Belgians, to seriously set about the work of civilising. Such a work as the founding of a great Free Congo State is worth a good many martyrs. I hope the missionaries will not worry the Free Congo State man with much doctrine. If they do, he may puzzle some of them, as that famous Zulu did Bishop Colenso. The Zulus believe that when the hills were young the great Spirit looked on the earth, and there were no men. And, as he looked, there came a rustling in the reeds, and the tribes came forth out of the marsh and spread themselves over the land. The Spirit looked at them carefully, and saw that they were good; whereupon, being pleased, he called the chameleon, and said:

"Go tell the tribes of men that death shall not come amongst them. They shall live for ever." But the chameleon dawdled along the road eating berries; and before he got near his journey's end, it had repented the Spirit that he had given men immortality, for already they had begun to be wicked. So he sent the lizard, saying: "Haste, and if thou comest first, tell the men that death shall be their portion." So the lizard made haste, and death was laid on mankind; and even before the chameleon came to them they began to feel its pangs. Wherefore, when the loiterer arrived and gave his useless message he seemed unto them as one that mocked, and they cursed him, and that is why he totters as he walks, and keeps changing colour.

I would not unteach them that; there is a moral in it. Just as there is in what Bishop Frazer, of Manchester, called "the beautiful myth of the Fall." Let them

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believe what they like about the creation, provided they give up the witch-doctor and his works.

In Africa, the missionary may do great good, provided he is supplemented with the unselfish white organiser. But then it is so hard to find such an organiser. We think we have him in India. We profess that we hold India simply for the good of the native, educating him up to self-government. All the young gentlemen who read as if they were Chinese preparing for the Literary Exam., and then go and live their best years in an unpleasant climate, and retire on a comfortable pension to Bath or Cheltenham, do so out of pure self-denial. They would, no doubt, much prefer farming in Manitoba or diamond-digging at the Cape.

Out of India, however, the unselfish white organiser is a very rare bird. For lack of him, our missions in New Zealand broke down. We taught the Maori that Christianity means charity and self-denial, and doing to others as you would be done by; and then we went on filching his land, setting tribe-claim against tribe-claim, buying of chiefs whom we bribed to sell the property of their clans, till at last we wore out his patience. He got to look on bishops and ministers of all kinds as crafty forerunners of the land shark; and, as he had outgrown the nature-worship—much like that of the old Gael—which lives in his old songs, he elaborated for himself, out of the Bible that we had put into his hands, a travesty of the Old Testament, the chief article of which was: "Every Maori on his own plot of land and under his own kauri tree."

The new religionists carried their imitation so far that they took to barking like dogs—hence the name "Hau-hau"—because Gideon's chosen band, dog-like, lapped up the water instead of drinking it.

Elsewhere, in the South Pacific, the missionary has been invaluable. He revealed to us the horrors of "blackbirding." But for him that hateful traffic might have gone on merrily, and Her Majesty's ships cruising about would have been none the wiser. Here, too, the death of a Bishop (Pattison) helped to call attention to an evil that is only scotched.

India? So much to be said on both sides. The Buddhist already has a creed which ought to make him ten times better than most Christians are.

"Why don't you turn Christian, you who are such a thoroughly good Christian in your ways?" said my father to a Cinghalese gentleman who had fought against him in the insurrectionary war, but who nursed him like a brother through a bad attack of dysentery.

"I've been too often on the beach at Colombo," was the sad reply.

He had watched the rowdy sailors and soldiers, who, on Sundays, were marched off to church like a flock of sheep.

Lady Dilke tells of a missionary in Kashmir who, "instead of identifying himself with the governing body"—the temptation to the missionary in India—is the trusted friend of priests, fakirs, and temple-guardians. When they were visiting a temple, "Please do as I do," said he. "Take off your shoes before you put on these slippers; they feel so strongly about it. The wife of a late Viceroy is still execrated by the Sikhs because she would go into this temple without taking off her boots."

Making converts will no more be the wise missionary's aim in India than elsewhere. The thing is to saturate the people with a truly Christian spirit; and how few men or women are capable of doing this! How few are even capable of going out of their own class and putting themselves in the place of "our poorer brethren" at home! But some are capable. Lady Dilke tells of a missionary's wife. Her husband is one of the "pony-trap" men, whom somebody, from a worldly point of view, praises, "because they teach the native a higher standard of comfort, and, therefore, make him keener after gain." Yet, when she went back after some weeks' absence, the villagers covered her gates with flowers, lighted up their huts, and, turning out in a body, met the bullock-cart in which she was travelling, and themselves drew her to her door.

I don't think any of these villagers will become such a questionable Christian as a friend of mine met on the African West Coast. This precious convert, whom drink had made confiding, told how the silly neighbours used no locks. "Over their barns they just nail up a verse of the Koran. But I laugh at such superstition, and go in and help myself when I want."

And how would the lady or her husband treat her converts at the Communion Table? That has often been a practical difficulty in India. Are whites and niggers to come up in the same batch? If not, what becomes of the "freedom in Christ,"

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which is the compensation for breaking caste and sundering family ties?

A clear missionary disaster was the Abyssinian War, and the break-up of that Christian Empire which counterbalanced these dervishes. A meddling German Jew, Stern, wanted to force his new faith on the Abyssinian Archbishop. Theodore got angry, and our Foreign Office pigeon-holed his autograph letter to the Queen. But I am not talking of missions to other Christians, which are offensive and often insulting. China is non-Christian; yet there, I take it, missions have already done such mischief as years of effort will not make up for. When I was young, I can remember a silly squire at a missionary meeting shouting out: "A million Bibles for China! We must fling them on the coast, and send them up the rivers. Cast your bread on the waters." The next thing I heard of was the Taeping War. A poor student of Kwang-si, Hung-sen-tsuen, had failed in several examinations. His disappointment told on his health—he was a Southerner of Hakka race, many of whom are epileptics. He saw visions; and what he had read about the Canaanite wars in a Bible that he had picked up, made him fancy he had a mission. He would be the Joshua to destroy the Canaanite Manchus, and bring back the old Mings. He began by going to the "Hall of Literature"—every village has one; a pattern surely for us—and destroying "the tablet of Confucius," on which are inscribed the names of the villagers who have deserved well of their country, and why. Then he preached; and the Bibles, largely spread among the impressible Southerners, helped him. Soon his followers were reckoned by the thousand. The Government was bankrupt, shattered by the iniquitous French and English opium war. There was no one to make head against him, and he soon developed into the Tien-Wang (heavenly King), a sort of Chinese John of Leyden, and, seizing Nanking, lived there for twelve years in much the same style in which John lived at Münster. Both sides committed the most fearful cruelties. The Taepings on principle—like the Jews, they were "to spare neither old man nor maiden, infant nor suckling"—the Imperialists in sheer despair. They were in the hardest fix in which a nation ever was. "The foreign devils" insisted on their indemnity of twenty million taels; and, at the same time, most of the foreign officials more than favoured the rebels. But for Gordon, the one honest white man in China, the dynasty must have fallen. Whether Gordon should not have at once thrown up his command when, after he had undertaken to save the lives of a score of Wangs who had surrendered, the Imperial General stealthily tortured them, and cut off their heads, is a question. It must have been fearful to be the ally and mainstay of monsters who on one occasion killed in cold blood sixteen thousand captives. Anyhow, the Taeping outbreak was prepared by Christian teaching ill-understood, and by the reckless diffusion of Bibles. The Chinese have no class-distinctions. They are the one nation which shows no trace of conquest—for the Manchus are few, and came late—of that old-standing evil which, among us, is answerable for our different treatment of "woman" and "lady." Yet even they don't allow "barbers, stage-players, or executioners" to compete in the exams.; and the big-drum men must in their view be stage-players of a sort. So must that Scotch missionary who, when the people of one city would not listen to his preaching—indeed, quietly took him and all his belongings to the river-bank, and bade him begone—built a bamboo balcony in the next place he came to, and made his two children, dressed in full Highland costume, let down tracts with hook and line to the crowd that soon gathered. Chinamen never take anything for nothing; so he who captured the tract put a few cash—square hole, you know, in the middle—on the hook, and in this way the good man made a sensible addition to his income. What good he did to the cause of missions, I can't say. It is everywhere a difficult question. Few will go so far as Canon Taylor, and declare it a fraud, and cry up the greater excellence of Mahomedanism—the religion of the brutal slave-dealers. Anyhow, as a moral police, missionaries have done immense good almost everywhere; but in New Zealand they have failed. Will they succeed in China, if they go on as they are going?

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

BY ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER I.

My first impressions of Woodburn Hall were not favourable. To begin with, the

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name was far too grandiloquent for the unassuming and depressing building to which it was applied, arousing, as it did, visions of marble terraces; green, undulating lawns shaded by giant cedar-trees, oak, or elm; a carriage-drive of a mile or two through a beautiful park; and, within, a lofty vestibule, hung with family portraits and the heads and antlers of deer; a library containing a thousand or so of rare volumes and manuscripts; funereal four-posters in all the bed-chambers; a great deal of mouldy tapestry, and—a ghost!

As it was, I saw a dingy brick edifice, neither new nor old, of two storeys in height, standing at a distance of barely fifty yards from its entrance gates, and, though decidedly, what is termed in the advertisements, a gentleman's residence, possessed of no attributes worthy of admiration; and having, moreover, a certain indescribable and impalpable aspect of gloom and despondency. There were two or three rows of discontented - looking windows, and an inhospitable door. Altogether, my fond imagination and mental visions, which had served to while away the tedium of a six hours' railway journey through a flat and uninteresting country, of a noble mansion and footmen in plush inexpressibles, took flight at once and for ever as my lumbering, ramshackle, countrified vehicle crawled through the modest gateway of my destination.

Where were the lofty wrought-iron gates, not to mention the picturesque flower-covered entrance lodge, through which I had pictured myself as passing?

I let down the crazy, rattling window of the cab, and hailed its equally crazy-looking and disreputable Jehu.

"Stop!" I cried aloud. "Are you sure you're right? It's Woodburn Hall I want, and——"

"And it's Woodburn Hall yer've got. What more d'yer want?"

"Oh, all right; drive on!" I responded, weakly.

But he was not disposed to let me off so easily.

"Party of the name of Wild yer wants, don't yer?"

I nodded my head.

"Well, this yer's Woodburn Hall, and a party o' the name o' Wild lives yer. Be yer satisfied now?"

I suppose I signified that I was, for he continued his crab-like, jolting motion along the semicircular gravel track which lay in front of the house, drew up at the door, and, descending from his perch, rang the bell. I could have cried with vexation, I was so disappointed! I had been led, or, to tell the truth—which is generally unpleasant, though salutary—had led myself to expect great things of this new situation, for—it is of no use to hide the fact any longer—I was only the new governess!

Only a governess; and what was worse still, a governess who had never yet succeeded in retaining any of her situations for longer than three or four months at a time; the reason being, as the ladies of the various families in which I had been employed in an educational capacity, asserted, that I was "too flighty"—which, being interpreted, meant, I was too good-looking for the post. I suppose it does sound shocking to make such a remark with regard to my own personal appearance, but it was the melancholy truth; else why should Mrs. Glubbins, who had a gawky, loose-jointed, sandy-haired son, rising twenty, declare that "I attracted dear Alfred's attention by wearing a fringe;" and further remark, "that a governess who wasted her time curling her hair, when she might be more profitably employed setting the children sums, was not worthy of the name, and must 'try elsewhere'"? And why, too, did Mrs. Ricketts, whose husband she was herself wont to describe trenchantly as a "philanderer," feel herself called upon to remark that, in her opinion, a pair of blue glasses constituted a necessary and natural part of a governess's outfit?

And now that I had, in answer to an advertisement, secured my present, and I hoped more permanent post, whence rose the sense of disappointment which I have represented myself as feeling? Why, the fact was, I had imbibed, through the medium of various novelettes and magazines—which I had been accustomed to devour in secret and the seclusion of my own bedroom; for surely the mind of one, whose walk in life was to teach the young idea how to shoot, ought to find all that was necessary for its relaxation between the covers of "Mangnall's Questions"—certain romantic and pernicious views with regard to my future life.

I am writing now from a different standpoint, and by the light of the acquired wisdom of later years. Nevertheless, I am ashamed to confess that, in undertaking this present situation of governess at Woodburn Hall, I had calculated not so much on the salary as on the chance of

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meeting there, among the guests and habitués of the mansion, some individual, some fairy prince, who might raise me from my situation of a tutorial Cinderella to a giddy height among the upper ten.

The governesses — who were rather a favourite type of character in the style of literature (mostly in the form of supplements) which I affected—were invariably beautiful, and generally married an Earl or Viscount who happened to be on a visit to the house in which they played a subordinate part, and, after triumphing successfully over nineteen pages of trials and mortifications, in small type, came out magnificently in white satin and the family diamonds on page twenty.

Thus it was that Woodburn Hall, in theory, had excited the fondest hopes and anticipations; and Woodburn Hall, in reality, had proved a fraud, and dashed them to the ground. A respectable, but gloomy-looking family residence at the best. Not at all the sort of place which was filled from garret to cellar for the shooting, and where one might meet "Debrett's Peerage," in knickerbockers, on the landing, and have the House of Lords looking in at the schoolroom window, in flannels.

I was young and I was foolish. I am now considerably older and infinitely wiser. With this apology, then, let me pass on, for I am aware that I have kept my charioteer ringing at the bell an unconscionable time.

CHAPTER II.

Twice did my son of Nimshi tug at the bell-handle without producing any visible effect. Just, however, as he was about to apply himself to it for a third time, the portal opened suddenly and noiselessly without any warning.

"Yer takes yer time about it," said Jehu, sarcastically.

"I thought I heard the bell ring," replied the woman who now appeared upon the threshold, "but wasn't sure, 'cause master's playin' on the pianner, with his feet on the treadles, and I didn't know but what you might be part o' the toon."

And as she spoke, through the open doorway there came a gust of music, which finally resolved itself into the March from "Tannhaüser," played by the hand of a master, which made me quake as I remembered the paucity of my own musical attainments. Fortunately, my pupil—for there was but one—was a little girl of seven, whom I had undertaken to instruct in the rudiments of English, French, music, and drawing, so that I might be able to pass muster. I was pretty confident about the French and drawing, as I had spent a year at school in Paris before my father died, and I had a certificate for the other accomplishment. Anyhow, I was glad to get out of the rickety conveyance in which I had traversed the intervening miles between the village of Woodburn and Little Pudsey, that being the nearest station to the Hall. I had not as yet seen anything of the village, and concluded that the Hall lay on the outskirts; and in this supposition I was correct—that is, if a place consisting of an ale-house, a dozen cottages, and a horse-trough can be considered to possess outskirts. Talking of outskirts, however, reminds me of one other thing.

The woman who held the door open, inviting me to enter, and who seemed a cross between a housekeeper and lady's-maid, was of such a thin, spare figure, and, withal, apparently possessed of such a distaste of anything superfluous, either of body or apparel, that the rusty black silk in which she was arrayed, might have been made out of an umbrella-case. A cap with a pink bow was the only sign of frivolity about her.

I entered the hall, which was tiled in black and white, and, as I stood watching the safe descent of my luggage from the roof of the cab, those wonderful strains of music floated down the staircase and seemed to envelope me in a flood of harmony. I could have stood and listened, heedless of everything, had not the lean one—whose name, on subsequent enquiry, turned out to be Martha Horrocks—desired me to follow her and superintend the disposal of my baggage, and remarked—apropos of the smuts which adorned the most prominent portions of my countenance—that I "might like to clean myself a little before I saw the missis."

I assented, nothing loth, though full of suppressed curiosity on the subject of my employers, who, it had just occurred to me, might turn out to be more interesting than, in my temporary depression, I had supposed. Particularly did I desire to see "the master," the man I had heard playing with such remarkable talent and expression, and whose music, even now, penetrated in gusts into the small, but not uncomfortable, upper chamber which was allotted to me. My previous experience being, that everything which was cracked and unpresentable was assigned—as being quite good enough — to the governess's

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room, I was agreeably surprised as I washed my hands in a basin which matched the ewer, and was not at variance with the soap-dish, and twisted up my hair before a mirror which was not liable to an action by reason of its libellous misrepresentations of the human race.

My spirits were beginning to rise again; after all, I might be very comfortable here, though not in the way I had expected, and —one never knew what might turn up!

A knock at the door disturbed these gratifying, but unpraiseworthy, reflections, and a voice informed me that the "missis" was ready to see me, after I had partaken of some refreshment.

But I preferred to get the interview over first; so—stating falsely that I was not at all hungry, and would prefer to see Mrs. Wild at once, if convenient—I followed the bony handmaiden, who was the only individual connected with the household I had seen as yet, into the presence of the lady of the house. She received me in what was, evidently, the drawing-room, the chief and only noticeable article of furniture in which was a magnificent grand piano, by Erard, which was standing open. There were two people in the room; one, the lady herself, sitting by the fire, and another, a man, standing with his back to me and looking out of the window, half-hidden by the curtains.

As soon as I looked at the mistress of the house, I was convinced that she, at any rate, was a nonentity. A small, nervous, colourless, insignificant personage, whose fingers were never still, but always plucking at her dress, or fidgeting with a ribbon, or smoothing her lace; with pale, washed-out eyes, which seemed to be perpetually trying to look over her shoulder, or round the corner, at something horrible.

She welcomed me kindly, but timidly, hoping I had had a good journey, and found my room comfortable, and that I should get on well with my pupil, and not find her very backward for her age, and so on, all the time casting scared and anxious glances out of the corners of her eyes, at the half-concealed figure in the window. At last, as though in answer to these mute appeals, he turned round and, emerging from his retirement, abruptly remarked that his experience with regard to the child was, that she was a great deal too forward, and that he hoped I should do my best to correct this fault.

Then, without further parley, he strode across the room and disappeared, turning, however, at the door to give an impressive, but inscrutable, glance at his wife. To my surprise—who had conjured up in my mind, while listening to his remarkable playing, a thin, dark-haired, and be-spectacled individual, with round shoulders and sallow complexion—my employer was a tall and rather stout man, with sandy hair and beard, and eyes which gave you the idea that he was either near-sighted or indolent, from his keeping them half-closed, gentlemanly, and with, in spite of his curt manner and address, a remarkably agreeable voice in speaking.

Such, at least, was my impression at the time of this, my first interview. At the same time, there was something peculiar about him; something that made you think of the man long after he had quitted you, and wonder what was the cause of the impression which he seemed to leave behind him—a sort of dominating influence, inexplicable, but unmistakeable.

His wife, however, seemed distinctly relieved at his absence, though she had appeared to quail for a second beneath his parting glance, as it rested upon her. She struck me as being older than he, and I was also convinced, in my own mind, as by a kind of second-sight, that she had had money, and he had married her for the sake of it, and perhaps it had not turned out to be so much as he had expected.

At any rate, before I had been half an hour in her society, I was conscious of feeling sorry for her, though I did not know why. She seemed so nervous and excitable, starting when a cinder flew out of the fire, and turning visibly paler when there was the sound of a masculine footstep crunching on the gravel walk without. At the end of the half-hour, during which she rambled on in a rather disjointed fashion, hoping that I should not find it very dull, and that Florence would be good and not give me too much trouble—this last more than half-doubtfully—I quitted her. She shook hands with me limply, but cordially, and I left her sitting there alone by the fire, with her restless fingers twitching and pulling at her handsome silk dress, alternately crumpling and smoothing the lace which trimmed it, and always casting uneasy glances over her shoulder, as though afraid of what she might see there.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 41.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VI. MR KESTELL'S PENSIONER.

No one but Jesse Vicary knew what Jesse Vicary did in his spare moments. There was no one in his lodgings who cared to know except 'Liza, and she kept a mental almanack of his comings and goings. She did not care what he did outside; but she liked to hear his "Thank you, 'Liza," or to receive his nod and smile. Jesse himself did not chronicle his own doings, as some self conscious folk are apt to do. Not that his mind was incapable of reflection; on the contrary, his thoughts were his companions; but there was nothing of the sentimentalist about him.

He looked around him and saw life as it was. He made no illusions about it, having the clear, healthy instincts of a man whose moral nature has not been wilfully debased or kept in a religious hot-house. He saw squalid poverty; he saw physical waste and moral degradation. At times he would come in depressed from some friendly visit to a neighbour, whose moral reform seemed hopeless; but then Jesse would lay hold again more strongly of the great truths of Christianity, and, on his knees—for he was not ashamed to pray, but knew that prayer was his only safeguard—he would once more call out in his heart that God was more powerful than evil, for, somehow, he feared to dim this belief by contact with darkness.

Over-cultivation often prevents fructification, and the school that Jesse Vicary had been brought up in had certainly not fostered sentiment. He could look back at his life at the grammar school and remember with mingled shame and pleasure hard fights of no mean order between himself and his school-fellows, and a certain amount of insubordination to his teachers, tempered by fear of what Mr. Kestell would say if he heard of it, and whether he would take him away from his only chance of raising himself and of getting knowledge. Though not more industrious than his school-fellows, Jesse even then craved for knowledge.

But, thrown in a small world which is a mimic of the big world and its attendant good and evil, Jesse could honestly look back and say that he had never soiled his conscience with deeds that would shun the light of day. He took no credit to himself for this; but it so happened that for a short time the boy had been brought under the influence of a man whose deep religious bearings had caused him to be accused of slight derangement in his cerebral mechanism.

A deep affection, such as will often be found between a pupil and his teacher, sprang up between these two, and Jesse never forgot the effect of that intercourse. It was like the opening of a new world to him; like the sound of rushing water in a desert; like the cool draught to a parched tongue.

Jesse had never talked of Richard Melton to any one, not even to Symee. The remembrance of that one year of friendship was something too holy to mention, as was also the grief when the poor teacher, whose genius in book learning was indisputable, was sent away because the head-master of the Grammar School found that the queer fellow was gaining too great an influence over the boys.

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Richard Melton's work, however, was accomplished as far as concerned the poor, almost friendless, Jesse Vicary. The world of spiritual power which he had seen with his own eyes, exampled by the wholly self-denying life of the despised schoolmaster, could never again be shut out from this pupil.

Looking back on that year, Jesse had come to the conclusion that Richard Melton must have experienced a great sorrow or had a great wrong done to him in his life. And yet he had never mentioned it to his boy friend; only he had painted to him the picture of injury heroically borne, so as to bring not crushing misery to the sufferer, but great nobility of soul. "If only he were alive now," often thought Jesse in his little den, "he would come here, and would tell me wonderful things, and make some of the mysteries around me as clear as he did then. If only I had been older, and could have understood him better!" But, alas! Richard Melton had been run over by a train, shortly after his dismissal, in an attempt to clear the line of an obstruction put there by some evil-minded person or persons unknown. "Another proof of his craziness," the head-master said, for the train went over the obstruction and also over the body of Richard Melton without going off the line. Jesse could still remember the boyish grief he had suffered when he heard the news; how he would wake up night after night, seized with the horrible nightmare that he was trying to save Mr. Melton and was too late, and he would find himself in an agony of fear at having seen, with terrible distinctness, the two fiery eyes of the on-coming train close upon him, which vision, curiously enough, occasionally took the appearance of Mr. Kestell's benign countenance.

That phase had gone by long ago; the lapse of time had softened the personal grief; but Jesse had the strength of noble natures, the strength to remember, which fact has not been enough considered by our philosophers and moralists. Even now at times, Vicary, strong, broad-shouldered man that he was, had a nervous, womanish dread of a train. Symee had found this out, and gently laughed at him, or scolded him for saying most likely it was a presentiment of the manner of his death. In truth, it was the strong effect of those terrible nightmares.

But besides arousing the power of spiritual outlook, it was this same Richard Melton who had implanted in the boy of no particular prospects that deep, intelligent love of books which had been Jesse's blessing, and also somewhat of a curse. It made him chafe against the dry routine of his clerk's work at the merchant's office. Card and Lilley were highly respectable coal merchants; but Vicary's work was as uninteresting as it is possible to imagine. He knew he could never rise higher, nor could his salary. On the other hand, if he continued to give satisfaction, there was no likelihood of his being turned off. But Vicary had had, very conservative persons would perhaps think unfortunately, the passion of learning implanted by the so-called crazy usher. He had taught him to make an intelligent use of the little Latin the grammar school gave freely, if uninterestingly. He had shown him the beauty of some of the classic authors, and eagerly pointed out far more than the boy could then take in, but which came back to him at intervals like the remembrance of dreams.

Vicary's mind became from thenceforth an insatiable devourer of all literary knowledge. He had, moreover, a marvellous memory, which seemed able to grapple with the difficulty of storing knowledge away till wanted. He wanted knowledge, and yet knowledge seemed of little use to him, for Mr. Kestell had procured him the post of office-boy at Card and Lilley's without consulting him; and here in London he had been ever since, rising from sweeping out the office to adding up tons of coals, and balancing profit and loss.

But London offers great advantages to book-lovers; the free libraries and the cheap book-shops soon knew Vicary's figure; the devouring of books proceeded side by side with profit and loss, and side by side with the growth of his spiritual nature.

Jesse had, however, now no thought of change. He was not enterprising for himself as far as money was concerned; still, he was glad of any extra work, not only for Symee's sake, but also because the work might perhaps lie in a direction more pleasing to him than tons of coal. It was this that had made him feel Hoel Fenner's kindness. After all these dreary years a new hope had entered his soul, and he thanked Heaven for it. Only those who have been longing for intellectual sympathy or exchange of thought can understand the feeling of Jesse; but not being used to good times, he was half afraid of his own joy. Symee's words came back to him. Was

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be ambitious? No. Or it was only a proper ambition such as Mr. Melton would have sanctioned. Outwardly, he was contented; he had health, strength, an honest name, if poor, and a love of learning.

Such was Jesse Vicary after Hoel Fenner's visit; he felt that he had passed a new threshold, and hope seemed then a glorious figure leaning on the anchor which was all powerful to support her.

The next day the new horizon made everything appear bathed in sunshine. Jesse felt an unusual spirit of reform take possession of him. Nothing looked impossible; he even began forming a plan about the possibility of telling 'Liza how much better she would look without smuts on her face, but thinking better of this, he decided he would put off this delicate mission till Symee should come to live with him. He took up a German book before going out, and found that the sense became clear to him. Everything seemed suddenly to have made a bound in a new direction; everything looked plain. He even entertained the idea of making Obed Diggings give up invention and stick to his cabinet-making; he would go, he thought, that very evening to him about it. So, coming home from the office, he purchased a bunch of flowers for Milly, and when his modest meal was finished, he sallied forth through the dingy streets.

Obed Diggings' lodgings were at the end of Golden Sparrow Street, over a small tobacconist shop, and the little front room where Milly lay all day on a couch near the window, was also the dwelling-room of the cabinet-maker, who had gone down in the world because of his too fertile imagination and his occasional inordinate thirst. But, in his way, Obed was a good father; his golden dreams of future fabulous fortunes always included poor Milly, who, having been allowed to tumble downstairs before her bones were sufficiently hardened by use, had sustained an injury to her spine, which made her a very useless member of the Golden Sparrow community. Her mind had grown, however, if her body had never been strong. She had been able to get about just a little when they lived at Greystone; but London air and the constant pressure of her father's erratic ways had taken away the little strength she had retained. How she hated London! But now they seemed settled there till death. Obed had heard of good work near Golden Sparrow Street, and in one of his moments of hope had left Greystone, and all his friends and relations, and had dragged his only child to her present quarters.

But Milly did not complain, she only longed.

When Jesse's knock was heard at the door, Milly's pale cheeks flushed. Down at Greystone she could never have seen him, so she said that partly made up for town life.

Her father was loudly talking and gesticulating to an acquaintance this evening. Each one fancied himself the genius and his companion the fool; so no wonder it sounded as if they were having words, whilst, in fact, each was trying to make the other see that he had better own that his rampart was indefensible; but this, as we know, is the last thing to be expected of our adversary.

Jesse Vicary's entrance happily stopped the discussion for a little. Milly heaved a little sigh of relief, though without stopping her delicate wool crochet, a labour she sold to the West End shops for ridiculous prices, this work being now as little profitable as the wool which originally ornamented the back of the sheep.

Obed jumped up to welcome his visitor. He was very hospitable, and would smoke and drink his last penny with a friend. Fortunately for him, from motives of economy, Jesse did neither.

"That's right now, Jesse, my lad. Glad to see you. You'll come and settle between us. Here's Mr. Joe Button says that a man, who has not been a miner, can never make any inventions for mines that will hold water. Now I say that he's wrong, quite wrong. We want to get the water out of the mines!" Obed brought his fist down on the table and made the glasses rattle. "Why, don't you remember that lantern of mine, Jesse, which I worked at last year? If I had finished it, why you'd never have heard of another explosion in those rascally mines, and yet I've never been down, nor never mean to go down, a mine. It's the brain that's wanted, not the blacking of one's clothes, as you seem to think, Mr. Button."

Jesse, smiling, cast a look at Mr. Button, and decided that he, too, belonged to the class that had been better off. Golden Sparrow Street was full of such people, and some of the men had as keen and clever intellects as you could wish to find when—yes, when the demon left them alone.

Mr. Joe Button's face spoke of mental capacity; but spoke also of drink. The

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oppressed look in his eyes, the shaking hands, the sudden flashes of wit, and the as sudden dull moments, when it seemed doubtful whether he took in all that was said, marked him out as a man already far advanced on the downward path which leads to hell upon earth. Mr. Button spoke good English, was better educated than Obed Diggings, though certainly less inventive; but he had none of that child-like confidence and openness of purpose which attracted one to the cabinet-maker in spite of his conceit, or, shall we call it, belief in himself.

"It's not any use a man that has never been in the bosom of a mine saying he can understand what is wanted," said Mr. Button, addressing Jesse, as more likely to be sane on the subject of safety-lamps. "I was overseer for ten years, up in the North, to a man that understood more than most land folk; and yet even he made mistakes at times."

"That was a good berth, I should think," said Jesse, cheerfully, as he crossed the room to give Milly the flowers he had bought for her. "Have you left it, sir, or are you only on a visit to Golden Sparrow Street?"

"Call it the Estate, Jesse, my lad; call it Golden Sparrow Estate. All the street belongs to one of your close-fisted money-getting villains," put in Obed, hotly, "who sends round his ugly-faced collector for the rents as if money was the sole object of man! You know the fellow we call Baggy Bob, eh, Jesse? Last time he called I was busy with that frame you saw, and didn't want to be bothered about rent. Well, he was as impertinent as——"

"Never mind all about that, father," put in Milly. "Can't you give Mr. Vicary a chair? Just look at these flowers he's given me."

Mr. Joe Button eyed the young clerk with his dull eyes as if he were trying to place him in a catalogue he kept for all the human beings he met, and the look, besides being dull and heavy, was also envious. Joe Button remembered himself when he too was capable of becoming an honoured and respected member of society; but he, like many of us, had failed on the way, and, whilst he blamed others for the failures, in his own heart he was honest enough to know he had only to blame himself.

Obed never blamed himself or others, having a happy unconsciousness of failure; but, to make up for this self-deceit, Obed never envied the embodiment of his might-have-beens.

"I don't see," answered Mr. Button, still eyeing Jesse, "I don't see that a rent collector has to be blamed for doing his duty. That's what England expects of us all. Indeed, I'm thinking of going into the collecting business myself. I've thought of tax collecting; but it doesn't seem to be varied enough. I'd prefer the private business; I never did like being mixed up with the Government."

Mr. Button did not mention that the reason of his being disinclined to serve Her Majesty was that his testimonials were much too vaguely worded to be of much use for a public life.

"I must say," replied Jesse, feeling he must make a remark, though he would have preferred Mr. Button's room to his company, "I should not like to be a collector of money. In the first place I should not like to do my duty in getting it out of people who were unwilling to give it to me; and then—well, I don't know," he added laughingly, "if I were very hard up I don't know whether the sight of gold that wasn't mine would give me much pleasure."

"And, during those ten years," continued Obed, still running on his own genius, "did you ever try to improve the safety-lamp, Mr. Button? I'm sure I'd have taken out several patents. You see the ideas are all so numerous in my mind that out they will come, like flour from a sack that's too full. It's wonderful!"

Mr. Button took his glass of beer and fixed his eye on Obed as he swallowed it down, as much as to say: "That man's a wonderful fool." He only answered him when he put down the glass.

"No, I didn't. I was busy in a better way, and my chief was particular, though kind enough. I've nothing to say against him as a master. It's what he left undone that I found fault with more, not what he did."

"And what was that?" said Obed. "Wouldn't try your new steam-valve, or something like that? I find men are as suspicious as rats with poison; they won't try it; which aggravates the feelings of those as lay the poison about."

"It was nothing of that sort," said Mr. Button, contemptuously, filling his glass again — "nothing. I'm sure the master wouldn't have stood inventions. He was always saying, 'Be cautious, Button; there must be no explosions here, remember; I

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should never forgive myself if the men suffered.' No, he was tender-hearted—too tender-hearted. I don't hold by soft hearts in a man's bosom; that's for the ladies. He was not mean, either; but, after all my long, faithful service, he refused me a character such as I thought necessary for my future. He owes me a character, that's what Mr. Kestell does."

Jesse was struck by the name, and also he could not refrain a smile, which he hid by turning away, before he said:

"Mr. Kestell! That's not a common name. Was he the owner of the mine?"

Obed and his daughter knew nothing of Mr. Button's character, but they knew well the name of Kestell, so both looked interested.

"He was the owner of the land first, and of the mine afterwards. It was one of those lucky hits which don't come often. He must have bought the land cheap. It went through two or three hands before; I don't remember the names of them. I was a native of the place, so I ought to know about it from the beginning. But, gracious me, I never thought what that bit of land was worth, or I would have kept it myself. In those days my father and I were big fools. I don't know anything that turns one's stomach more than seeing a man walk into something of uncommon value without any trouble. Lord! what sums he's made from that mine. Of course now it's not so good as it was; trade's gone to the dogs. But Mr. Kestell ought not to complain."

"How long is it since you left off that work?" said Obed Diggings, eyeing his friend.

"A year or two—yes, two. And, as I said before, I don't complain of what Mr. Kestell did. He recognised my value, for he gave me a pension; but he wouldn't put enough down in writing. A pension is no use to a man whose energy is not gone; you see, he prefers work."

"Perhaps it's your Mr. Kestell," said Obed; and Jesse noted at once, nor indeed was he surprised at noting, the suspicious gleam in Mr. Joe Button's face.

"It's Kestell of Greystone they call him. If it's yours or not, I'm not complaining of him, except that he was too soft; a chicken heart is good to make chicken-broth for invalids, it's not much good for men."

Soon after this speech, however, Mr. Button took his departure, and Jesse was not sorry.

"It seems to me that Mr. Kestell has pensioned a rogue," said Obed, who could not forgive his visitor's scornful remarks about his inventions. "He came to me about some business, and was recommended to me by people who knew I was clever in most lines. But I think I could patent that rogue, Jesse, my lad, and no one would wish to steal him from me."

"You've often said how kind Mr. Kestell was, Mr. Vicary," said Milly, glad to be again a recognised unit in the room; "and that is a proof of it; he couldn't guess you would ever meet this Mr. Button, could he?"

"That he couldn't! I expect that his overseer became too fond of the bottle, so, instead of a false character, he gave him a pension. You see he wouldn't be unjust to another employer, and yet wouldn't let the man starve. I did once hear he had made money by some mining property; but I never knew any particulars. One never hears Mr. Kestell talk of his good deeds."

"I expect you've done more for yourself than ever Mr. Kestell did for you?" said Obed. "It's wonderful the difference there is in human stuffs; some will turn into good patents, and some are quite worthless inventions."

"Not worthless," said Jesse, "don't say that, Mr. Diggings. If I were to think so, it would take away so much of the joy of living; and just now everything seems to be bright. No, no, not worthless; I don't believe God ever loved a worthless world."

Obed shook his head; his religion dated back a long way, and stopped soon after.

"I'm not going to bring out a theological patent as you could do, Jesse—no, but I go about a good deal, and see much more worthless than good stuff. But just talk a bit to Milly, and I'll fetch the frame. Why, it's vastly improved since you saw it. You'll see it is."

When Obed was gone to his own workshop, Jesse seemed to throw off a momentary sadness that had come over him. Milly was still occasionally smelling her flowers. She was so grateful to Jesse for his thought of her, and yet did not know how to express her gratitude.

"It makes me think of the country," she said, looking up at him, "and of the things you tell me of Rushbrook. You know I never got further than the village but once, when our Rector's wife drove me to the farm at Rushbrook; but it's like a dream to me now. I remember nothing but the water. Sometimes, when it's very

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hot here, I think of that beautiful water till it gets almost cool."

"I wish I had your power of making wishes come true," said Jesse, smiling.

"But not all of them. When father talks as he did just now, I want to say something, and I get angry. There's a meeting to-night at the 'Golden Sparrow,' and Tom Novis is going to talk."

Tom Novis was a man who lectured on religion or non-religion. He also came round with infidel tracts, and, among his friends, was considered a smart fellow, and one who knew something. Jesse also knew him slightly.

"I dare say he means to do good," said Jesse, thoughtfully. "He couldn't take so much trouble to do harm. But he hasn't really gone into things; one soon comes to the end of his knowledge. I expect, Milly, he's not yet felt the want of something above himself; but there are many who might know more, and yet do the same thing."

"It's all I have," said the girl, in a low voice. "I think God has wanted me to lie here because He sees it's good for me; and if they took that from me what would they leave me? That and your visits," she added, more cheerfully, "and the books you lend me, though I can't understand them all."

"I'm afraid I don't choose them properly for you; but I'm getting to know your taste better."

In truth, Jesse was very ignorant about the opposite sex, as most men with a few exceptions are, even those who pride themselves on their knowledge.

"But, Milly, I have a piece of good news, which I have kept for you, because you will be glad. I said to myself you shall be the first to hear it."

The bright blush told of Milly's pleasure, but she guessed it only too easily.

"They've given you a holiday?"

"Yes; I was to have it in December, but the other clerk has offered to change; it's more convenient to him; and I'm to have my ten days in a week's time. Only think of that, Milly, in this glorious weather. Fancy striding up to 'Crow's Nest,' and roaming about the pools, and climbing the Beacon, and going miles and miles over the forest."

"I am glad," said Milly, so unselfish that she would not even say how much she would miss him. "I wonder if, some day, I shall be able to walk there, too. But when you talk I can see it all."

"And there's something else, Milly. I've got a new friend, and he has brought me some work, work after my own heart."

"That's Mr. Fenner you told me about."

"Yes, and he came himself to pay me a visit; and, what is nicer, he had just been to Rushbrook and talked about it."

"And you'll lodge at the Farm, and see your sister often?"

"Yes, as often as Mrs. Kestell will let her out. She's a dreadfully exacting person; but then Symee never complains, because of Mr. Kestell's kindness. You see the sort of man he is from that Mr. Button's story."

"You deserve all your pleasure," she said from her heart; "you're always doing something for other people."

"Nonsense! Why you would do the same for your friends, and aren't you one of my friends?"

Milly shook her head.

"You're ever so different, somehow."

"A working-man, that's all—not an inventor," added Jesse, smiling, as Obed Diggings came back, carrying his last effort of genius with great pride and care in his hands.

THE RIDERS OF THE PLAINS.

FROM the scrubby copsewood, that spreads in clusters along the western frontier of Manitoba to the towering ramparts of the Rocky Mountains, and from the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, which runs its invisible line through dreary plains devoid of human life, to the moss-grown desolation within the Arctic Circle, stretches a vast wilderness known as the North-West Territory of Canada, and once the exclusive hunting and trading ground of the hardy exiles who were in the employ of the Honourable Company of Merchant Adventurers, trading from England into Hudson's Bay. I call it a wilderness advisedly. For it is of such immense extent that the thin line of settlement which does exist, along the Canadian Pacific Railway and the valley of the Saskatchewan, does not ameliorate the prevailing solitude to any appreciable degree. It is but like the filmy and almost invisible thread from a spider's web upon a wall, that thin belt across the almost incomprehensible area of two million six hundred thousand square miles. And, be it known, people who cross these

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plains in Pullman cars from Montreal to Vancouver obtain only a mere glimpse of them from the shore, as it were, of the prairie sea. And until the beginning of the present decade, the trapper of the Fur Companies, and the Indian, alone roamed over this ocean of vegetation; and the log-built forts and canvas tents of the North-West Mounted Police dotted its surface, far apart.

These scarlet-coated Riders of the Plains, about five hundred in number, held the hordes of warlike savages in check, and keep from them the firewater of the pale-faces.

The second rebellion of Louis David Riel burst out, like the eruption of a volcano, in 1885, and was quelled, at an immense sacrifice of blood and treasure, by the Dominion Government. An army of Canadian Militia was poured into the disaffected districts, to the relief of the beleaguered garrisons of Police, which body, after this, was increased to one thousand men; and no Indian was permitted to leave his reserve without a pass signed by the resident Agent, which privilege is only granted on a sufficient reason being given.

It is with this force of guardians of the peace that I wish to deal in this brief paper. I had the honour to serve in its ranks for three years and a half, so I may be supposed to have some slight knowledge of the subject.

The discipline of this body of men is exactly similar to that of a cavalry corps at home, but the organisation is somewhat different; and the drill, in field movements, is based on that of mounted infantry. The whole is under the command of a Commissioner, with an Assistant-Commissioner holding the relative rank of Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel respectively. The control of the Force rests with the Prime Minister, and the Departments of Justice, and the Interior, who direct its affairs from Ottawa. Thus, it is civil in its primary constitution, though military in its component elements. There are ten divisions, or troops; and each is commanded by a Superintendent. The Inspecting-Superintendent ranks as Major. Each troop has its complement of subaltern officers, known as Inspectors; and also the necessary non-commissioned officers—sergeant-major, staff-sergeants, sergeants, and corporals. The privates are constables, with the powers of such, in any part of Canada. A supply of transport waggons is attached to each division; as owing to the country in which the duty is performed being uninhabited for the most part, this is indispensable. The stations, at which are the head-quarters of the various divisions, are hundreds of miles distant from each other. From the wooded Saskatchewan, the "rapid-flowing" Kissaskatchewan of the red man, to the wild frontier region adjacent to the States; from the fertile farms that line the limit of Manitoba to the glacier peaks and rolling foot-hills of the Rockies, are scattered, at intervals, the barracks and camps of the Mounted Police.

Regina is the capital of the North-West Territories; situated about half-way between Winnipeg and the mountains. Here is established the Depôt-Troop, with the head-quarter offices and staff. The detachments, stationed at different points along the railway, are supplied from this division. Here the recruits are received, and put through a proper course of mounted and dismounted drill. When they are reported efficient, and dismissed, they are drafted off to the different outposts. The term of service is for five years; but a man may purchase his discharge under certain circumstances and conditions. Each trooper, or constable, on joining, receives a splendid kit, including every requisite, free. The rations are excellent and abundant; and, when serving on the prairie, during the summer, an extra half-ration is issued to every unit. This is superabundance; so much so that, at the end of every month, there remains a surplus, which is generally exchanged for luxuries for the mess. The uniform is scarlet jacket or tunic, blue cloth riding-breeches with yellow stripe, and long boots and spurs. A white helmet, and cavalry forage-cap with yellow band, is the summer head-dress; replaced in winter by a cap of black sealskin, with yellow busby-bag. In addition to the regulation-cloak and cape, an overcoat of buffalo-fur was served out in my time; but, owing to this magnificent animal having become almost extinct, a substitute is now provided. The Indian moccasin, with two pairs of socks and one pair of long stockings, cover the feet in winter in lieu of boots, as the latter impede the circulation, and would be dangerous in the excessive cold.

Sometimes, but not often, the thermometer descends to sixty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit. On one exceptional occasion a party of us encamped at night—

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on Sunday, the twenty-first of December, 1884—on the Great Salt Plains, en route to the Saskatchewan, when the instrument registered ninety-four degrees of frost!

The arms are a Winchester repeating carbine and heavy Enfield revolver; and in addition to these, the sergeants wear swords. The horses are the native bronchos—wiry, game, indefatigable, and superior to every other class for the work required. The Californian saddle, with broad wooden stirrups, is used, as being most suitable for long rides across the prairie. But no extended journeys can be undertaken in the saddle in winter, therefore, distant marches are made with sleighs.

A Troop is divided between Maple Creek and Medicine Hat, both stations on the Canadian Pacific Railway to the west of Regina, and within the influence of the Chinook winds, which render the winters very much more endurable. These are warm breezes blowing from the Pacific periodically, through the clefts in the mountain barrier, and, under their balmy breath, the robe of snow vanishes as if by magic. This troop moves south, to the International Boundary, every year, as soon as spring begins to break through the rigid bonds of winter. B Troop, which enjoys the comforts of winter quarters at Regina, also goes under canvas for the summer on the frontier. The whole extent of this, from Manitoba to British Columbia, is patrolled during the open season by A, B, H, and K Troops, which have permanent camps established and outposts thrown out its entire length. This system in a great measure prevents the smuggling of stock—cattle and horses—upon which there is a duty of twenty per cent. ad valorem into Canadian territory. Whiskey, too, is contraband, the prohibition being for the welfare of the aborigines. Horse thieves and desperadoes, from the lawless regions of Dakota and Montana, often try to run the blockade with booty. This cordon also acts as a bulwark against the American Indians, of whom there are large reservations along the northern bank of the turbid-rolling Missouri. C Troop occupies the fort at Battleford, a small town at the junction of the Battle River and the North Saskatchewan. This settlement was sacked and partly burnt by the redskins in 1885.

There was formerly an outpost—the "Ultima Thule" of soldiering—at Fort Pitt, to the west; but the garrison were obliged to retreat from the overwhelming swarms of Crees, under Big Bear. This they did in plucky style, enduring terrible sufferings, running a leaky scow down the river among whirling ice-blocks, and exposed to attack from the bluffs on the northern shore.

In the Eagle Hills, near to Battleford, is a powerful reserve of Stonies—Assiniboines of the Plains. D Troop is in British Columbia, at Tobacco Plains, up the Kootenai River, among the Kootenai and Shuswap Indians; the former of which rather alarmed the white settlers a few years ago. E Troop is stationed in barracks at Calgary—eight hundred and thirty-nine miles west of Winnipeg—the most prosperous and go-ahead city in the Far West, and the capital of the provisional district of Alberta. This is the garden of the Territory, and the favourite post in the corps. Around, in the curving valleys of long grass, are many large cattle-ranches; the streets are alive with swaggering cowboys in huge sombreros and fringed "shaps;" and the reserve of that magnificent race, the Blackfeet, is not far off. F Troop is exiled at Prince Albert, a large settlement isolated on the Saskatchewan, two hundred and forty miles north of Qu'Appelle. Forty-five miles to the south-west, on the south branch, is Batoche, a colony of French half-breeds, who migrated here from the Red River after Riel's fiasco at Fort Garry. Here the rebel leader committed the first overt act of his second rising, and established his base of operations. General Middleton, with a strong column, supported by artillery, had four days' fighting before he carried this place, defended as it was with the most cunningly-devised rifle-pits.

Far-away Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan are the quarters of G Troop. These are at the head waters of the mighty river, in a lonely land, on the threshold of the unknown region of Athabasca, and the gateway to that marvellous valley of a future "boom," the Peace River. H Troop is at Fort Macleod, under the shadow of the Rockies, in the extreme south-west corner of the Territory. Here the fierce bands of the Bloods and Piegans need a strong hand to hold them in; and, in spite of all precautions, they generally ride forth each succeeding spring on marauding expeditions, directed principally against the

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equine property of their southern neighbours; for there are branches of the same tribes over in Montana. K Troop remains at Lethbridge, a new mining town, fifty miles from Macleod, where there are important coal-fields.

Such, in bare outline, is the distribution of this force, whose motto is "Maintien le Droit," and in whose ranks are "all sorts and conditions of men." Their entire time is spent in the arduous duties of a campaign. The life is hard and lonely, especially in the long winters, when lake and stream are locked in the stern grasp of ice, and the howling blizzards sweep in deathly riot across the frozen wastes. It is a rough life, too; and the long rides over the endless plains, on the trail of thieving redskins, tax a man's physical endurance to the utmost. The camps along the frontier in summer are simply hot-beds of "ennui;" the blazing sun beats down from a cloudless sky with torrid heat upon the arid, glaring prairie; the mosquitoes swarm from the sluggish creeks; and the long days in the saddle, out on the wide desert of grey and withered grass, are wearisome, and wearing to the spirit beyond all words. Game is scarce on these forlorn steppes, in places. The buffalo no longer shakes the earth in herds of thousands, and only antelope and jumping-deer fall a prey to the rifle. In the fall, however, much prairie chicken and duck may be bagged. But there is no life in this wilderness. All is hushed, save when the awful stillness that reigns at night is broken by the unearthly shrieks and demon laughter of the coyote.

Now and then some lodges of roving Sioux may be pitched near a solitary outpost; but there is no other society. The Sioux are simply refugees from the United States; and, not having signed any treaty, are not confined to reserves. And the only parts where the homestead of the pioneer may be met with, like outlying picquets in advance of the army of settlement, are on the verge of the railway, on the confines of Manitoba, in the glorious ranching country to the West, and around the three towns—or rather villages—of Edmonton, Battleford, and Prince Albert: seven days' march from the connecting-link with civilisation.

The life of both officers and troopers is one of constant uncertainty, and the greater part of it is often mooned away in a solitude as trying as that of Alexander Selkirk, the king of hermits.

TWO DAYS IN CANTON.

SECOND DAY.

After breakfast the next morning, receiving many a hint from our captain, who, compass in hand, is fond of rambling alone through the mazy city, we start with worthy Ah Cum for more serious business, and provide ourselves with lunch, to be independent. Passing through streets that we recognise from time to time, we enter a road leading past the Roman Catholic Cathedral—a massive granite building not yet quite complete, but already in use; and we learn that a claim by the Chinese for the ground on which it is built is being put forward, as they say that the term for which it was yielded to the French has expired. There is trouble in store for this cathedral.

And now, passing under a heavy gateway in the wall, separating the old city from the new, our bearers carry us up a steep flight of stairs, to an old building surmounting the arch. This building contains the famous water-clock, a series of copper vessels, one below the other, the water dripping from each to each, the lower containing a float, which, by its rising through a hole in the cover, records the time of day. Twice a day an attendant winds the clock by filling the top vessel from the bottom one and adding sufficient water to make up for evaporation. This clock has the proud distinction of being the only one in the world which has gone for six hundred years and has never told the correct time yet. The old building is also used as a storehouse for public documents, some of which are printed in a clumsy press in the room at the back of the clock.

We descend, just looking out over the mud-coloured roofs of the flat town, above which rise singularly few large buildings—the most conspicuous being the square, massive towers of the public pawn-shops, looking strong enough to resist bombardment. On every roof are stored large brown pots of water, in readiness for the periodic fires which devastate this human hive.

On our way to the execution-ground we stop to see the production of some of the beautiful embroidery for which China is renowned. The pattern is pounced in white by one boy, sketched in by another with Chinese ink, and then passed to the needle of the fair workers. At least, fair workers would ply the needle in England;

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here they are not so lovely. The workers are all men. The most delicate work in the shop—with silk like gossamer, the separate stitches almost invisible — was done by a half-naked veteran, who, with round horn spectacles on his wrinkled old nose, was frowning and scowling over his frame in a dimly-lighted corner. Perhaps it was ignorance; but we preferred the harmonious sober tints of much of the older work to the glaring contrasts and violent patterns of the new.

We pass now through a quarter given up to the hewing-out of the solid, heavy coffins used by these people—fitting preparation for the place we are approaching—the execution-ground of the Canton provinces, where, every year, some three hundred poor wretches are released from the misery which has been theirs from their first imprisonment.

Ground is too valuable here to be wasted, and when not required for its ghastly purpose, the enclosure is a veritable potter's field, where the huge clay stoves and pots, moulded in the adjoining factory, are put out in the sun to dry. It is a space open among the houses, and open to the passing street at one end, a dead wall on the east and south, the potter's shop filling up the long west side. The whole ground is some forty yards by twelve in size, and a more innocent-looking place could not be seen. Leaning against the wall are five or six decaying frames of deal, which the eye just takes in, but passes over with indifference, until it is explained that to these are bound the miserable wretches condemned to die by that most fiendish of death sentences—the Ling-chi.

To these rough boards the criminal is tied, and the callous crowd look on while the sharp and heavy sword of the executioner smites first an arm or finger, hand or shoulder, ear or foot, until, still living —if he have strength to live—the quivering victim has sufficient wounds to justify a fatal blow. This death is the portion of parricides, and of but few others; that crime being the most heinous in this nation of ancestor-worshippers. The man under ordinary sentence simply kneels on the ground and stretches his willing neck to the blow, death being welcome after his experience of the mercy of the law.

It is refreshing to go from this place, where life is ended, to a place where life begins for the aspirant for official honours. Here is the vast Examination Hall, where the collected scholars of the province assemble to compete for the necessary degree. The vacant posts are usually about one hundred and fifty to two hundred in number; but the competition is so keen that no ordinary hall will suffice, and an elaborate assemblage of buildings is necessary. Standing under the principal gateway of the huge enclosure, we see far away clustered buildings, where, in addition to the rooms of the officers charged with examining the vast piles of essays sent in by the scholars, are ranged stores, guard-rooms, and watch-towers. In the immediate foreground, a wide space, two hundred yards long, is flanked with walls from which open doors at every four yards. Each of these doors leads to a long, long passage, where, with a dead wall in front, small cells are built for the use of the competitors. Far to the right and left stretch these rows of cells, and far they need, for there are no less than eleven thousand of them; and even this number is not sufficient, for a thousand more temporary cells must be raised at examination time in the central open spaces. For twenty-four mortal hours the candidate must sit in his small brick cell, with a board for chair and a board for table; while up and down the long corridors pace many and many a guard, to prevent communication. With twelve thousand candidates, some seven hundred guards, and as many examiners, the place must be a busy scene in examination days; now it is grass-grown and desolate.

Leaving this hall, we again plunge into the streets, and soon our chairs are pushed away to the side of a small open space, to wait while a sulky-looking mandarin is carried by, not deigning to cast a look at the poor "foreign devils" as he is borne by eight dirty coolies, yelling and shrieking, through the throng, preceded by pompous guards, waving long horse-hair flappers as they go. As we proceed we are beset by children and crones plucking us by the arm, thrusting deformed limbs in our faces, pushing skinny hands to us holding shallow baskets, shrieking for backsheesh in a heathen tongue, for we are close to the Temple of Horrors, the most popular in the place, where congregate in consequence all sorts of harpies to prey upon the crowd. A busy trade is also done by peripatetic dentists in this place, and festoons of extracted teeth hang from the trees in the court. Around the open space runs a sort of wooden cloister, behind the heavy rails of which are dis-

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played the torments of the Buddhist hell. We are glad to escape from the alms-beseeching crew; and, suggesting to Ah Cum that an excellent lunch awaits us, he heads for the Five-Storied Pagoda, high on the city wall, at the far side of the town from our point of entry.

The way to the pagoda lies along the city wall, and a refreshing breeze greets us when we mount. The wall, some six hundred years old, is about twenty feet thick, being in reality two walls with the enclosed space filled with earth. Before the days of artillery it must have been a formidable obstacle; but the high embattled front is so fantastically broken up with loop-holes, embrasures, and sheer ornament, as to weaken it to an absurd extent. Behind every embrasure, say at every fifteen yards, frowns a heavy gun. Frowns is the correct word to use when speaking of guns; but, poor old things, their threatening days are over, and very woe-begone they look, each with its decaying shed protecting it, each more rusted and pitted than its neighbour, each of different calibre from its neighbour. The initials in English characters, "B. P.," on several, puzzle us at first, till the appropriateness of "Brummagem Pattern" occurs as a happy thought. Sheep in hundreds graze on the ramparts, and very fresh and juicy looks the grass. Now a pleasant shade falls upon us, and the pagoda is reached. It is less a pagoda than a square tower, and is devoid of any attempt at ornament. Built of dark wood framing, with pink plaster walls and heavy overhanging roofs, it is a picturesque object, but not the pagoda of our childhood. As we ascend, Ah Cum tells us that here, and in the neighbouring temples, were quartered the allied troops during the occupation of the town. Capital barrack-rooms these long cool chambers must have made; and a constant breeze plays on the tower during the summer months. But oh! the desolation of the lower floors now. Dirt, cobwebs, fallen plaster, blistered paint—one stairway fallen bodily—here and there beams suspiciously protruding, as in every building we have seen the trail of neglect is over them all.

On the upper storey it is different. Newly colour-washed, cleanly kept, and containing a heavy-railed enclosure, where six carved figures stand guarding a gilt figure of Buddha in the usual posture, this storey is now used as a restaurant, and when we reach it is full of chattering men. Bringing our stools to the verandah, we begin our lunch; but the wistful looks at every mouthful from some, the stolid staring of others, the grinning interest of the rest of the gathered crowd, is a weariness to us. Blessed Ah Cum! What a knowledge of your countrymen you have! Pretending to be wrapt in thought, he drops, unconsciously, a ten-cent piece, which rolls quietly to the edge, and drops over to the grass-grown court below. No one seems to notice it, but soon one and then another looks round and yawns, as if he had done what he came for, and was going home now; then there is an indifferent sauntering towards the stairs of two or three; then of more; then the whole crowd is moving towards the stairs. No sauntering now—each knows his neighbour's little game, and soon a laughing crowd is surging downwards. Floor by floor the shouting gets more faint, till, with a cry, the whole pour out, and hunt, scrambling on the grass. A coin dropped from time to time keeps the crowd below, and we finish our lunch in peace.

A grand view of river, town, and country is comforting to our eyes satiated with observing details, and we lazily watch the floating shadows of the clouds, and the clear, distant hills, changing from pearly-grey to purple, and gold, and blue, with a blissful feeling that here is something we need not look at unless we like without annoyance to our conscientious guide; and that the spreading beauties of the world are, after all, the only sights that never tire. But my companion is growing somnolent, and there is yet much to see, so we rise, half-reluctantly, and descend.

We have seen from the city wall the enormous expanse of cemetery that stretches to the north, the clustering little graves, each marked with its short square stone, where, in a few months' time, every man of the province who respects himself will come, with propitiatory offerings of food and flowers, to worship at his forbears' graves—the only outward form of religious observance he troubles himself with through the year, except the daily lighting of a fragrant joss-stick in the little niche that is to be seen in every house, usually by the door-step. We now proceed to the "City of the Dead," where the bodies of the rich may lie for many a year sometimes before actual sepulture. Passing a lotus-laden lake, where herons and storks stand motionless in the shade, we enter a walled enclosure, where a hundred rooms

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are provided for the lying-in-state of the richer Chinese. Incredible amounts are paid for coffins for this purpose; several that we see having cost more than five hundred pounds, for the Chinaman pays more respect to his manner of burial than to his comfort during life. In two rooms, side by side, we are shown magnificent coffins of hard rosewood, each carved from the solid trunk of a stately tree, and lacquered till the blackness shines like a mirror. These are empty yet, and have awaited the deaths for many a year of a worthy couple, whose son is a spendthrift, of whose filial piety their doubt has been shown in this practical manner by the careful pair. There is a quiet simplicity about this building which shows the tender reverence with which all matters connected with death and burial are observed. As we leave, we pass the parade-ground of the Imperial troops, and see in the distance the curious drill, in which nearly every man bears a flag in addition to his arms.

And now, after a short journey through the chink-like streets, we are deposited at the doors of the Law Courts, having passed on our way the wretched prisons, where the leading principle is to make jail-life deterrent, and not attractive. Wherever a few feet of space can be spared in a court or alley, will be seen, chained by one foot to the wall, huddled one with the other, exposed to the sun and the gaze of passers-by, the lesser victims of the law. Here, under light sentence, and allowed to wander freely within prescribed limits, may be seen men bearing the weight and the cangue—the first, a heavy mass of iron fastened by a long chain to the prisoner's leg; the last, a wide, wooden collar, fitting the neck, and resting on the shoulders—too wide for the man to feed himself, or to keep away the buzzing insects, which make this mode of punishment so great a torment. The prisoners under heavy sentence are not at this time visible; but our experience in the court tells us what their condition may be. We enter the high, wood gates, and, threading a maze of alleys, reach the Supreme Court of the Kwang Tung provinces.

Imagine an open space, thirty yards by fifteen, enclosed by high white-washed walls, open to the sky except at the farther end. This end—occupying a third of the whole space—is covered by a thick and clumsy roof, supported by rough wooden pillars. The front is open to the yard; the back has two doors leading to the private apartments of the judges. In the middle are four small deal tables, with four common chairs at each. Hanging on the walls are bamboos, fetters, scourges, and oddly-shaped instruments, the use of which we may only guess. Within this covered space officials only may enter; the under-strappers of the place look on from the open space. The general public are not admitted.

There is a piteous contrast now made evident to us as we scan the administrators of and the sufferers by the law. The judges have not yet come; they are smoking opium in the private rooms beyond; but the jailers are there, the soldiers are there, the interpreters, the pipe boys, the clerks —a callous crowd who laugh and swagger, and crack celestial jests as though they were performers in a farce and were waiting for the call-bell for the curtain. Outside, in the glaring sun, crouch and lie the prisoners awaiting their trial. Clothed in chains, appear these miserable creatures—neck, arms, waist, and ankles, bear each their heavy fetters, and the thin rags of their scanty clothes have been torn to ribbons to pad the chafed and festering sores. They do not move; they are too weak to move, and lie where they are flung—some in, some out of the vegetable baskets in which they have been borne by filthy coolies through the streets to their place of trial. These are a noted gang of pirates; yet, steeped to the lips though they may be, in murder, we cannot look upon the horrors of their state without the pity that those smooth-faced smirkers in the court there never know.

Now there is a movement, and there enters, through the curtained door at the back, a tall, intellectual, grave-featured man; and the chatterers are silent and take their proper stations. He seats himself, and there enters another. His face is undeniably clever; but there is a fixed half-laugh upon his face that augurs ill for any man claiming mercy from him. Two more enter, and the court is full for the day. These are the mandarins on duty. Dressed in long, white robes, bare-headed, there is a simple authoritativeness about them that tells of their absolute power. This is not the first day, by many, of the trial. All evidence has been taken, and their opinion decided upon; but as no death sentence can be carried out without the prisoner's confession to its justice, the resistance of the prisoners must be borne down and confession extorted. There is

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no trial to-day, save one of endurance—between determination on one side and love of life on the other.

Poor wretch! what love of life can remain in that joint-racked fevered mass of suffering, in barely human shape, that is carried up now before his judges, and huddled into a semblance of a kneeling posture on the flags!

The high-bred mandarin scorns to understand the low-bred Cantonese dialect of the prisoner, and a young interpreter advances. Our fingers itch round our malacca-canes as this young smug-faced miscreant goes through his work. He delivers the mandarin's warning that further denial will be useless, and asks what the crouching wretch has to say that he should not be sent to the execution-ground. The murmured reply of "Not guilty" rises, received by the interpreter with a shout of laughter, whole-souled, side-splitting laughter, which has to expend itself before he can translate to the smiling judge. Another question is sent by the mandarin, and the young interpreter, bending over the prisoner, coaxes and persuades him to reply, looking the very picture of kindly feeling. Again the answer is received with peals of laughter, and so the ghastly farce goes on. The prisoner is warned that he will be flogged daily until he confesses; and the few rags on his back are pulled back, showing the fearful traces of his last chastisement, for the mandarin to calculate the number of stripes he can bear. In the meantime another poor wretch is brought into the hall. The judge is getting weary now; one question only is asked, and a sign is given to the jailers to bring their powers of persuasion to bear, and he is huddled away to one of the pillars, and the work of torment begins.

Meantime the mandarins, who have now been at work for a quarter of an hour, need rest and refreshment. The pipe-boy fills and lights a brightly-polished hookah, and holds it for each to take half-a-dozen whiffs in turn, while other boys pour tea, bring fruit and sweetmeats, and the hall becomes a restaurant; the mandarins lolling back, and chatting as though the torments of a few pirates, more or less, were nothing uncommon. And, to say the truth, they are only too common; and familiarity with horrors has brought inevitable callousness. In this teeming city, and with this fatalist crowd, stern measures must be necessary, the deterring effect of which must however be questioned, as Ah Cum's admonition to us as the group of onlookers closed round us was: "Look out for your pockets."

And now the jailers have done their work, and the second prisoner is in a position to treat with consideration the judge's warning to confess. Can he wish his life to endure thus daily, knowing there will be no final escape except at the hands of the headsman? His position now is merely one of preparation for bitter torments by bamboos and club, and yet it is miserable enough.

After this we were in no mood for further sight-seeing, and returned to our ship; and the next morning went down the river with the tide and stream behind us, losing sight one by one of the landmarks, but bearing in our memories many a strange picture of life in this far-eastern capital.

"HEARTS ARE TRUMPS."

A COMPLETE STORY.

HARDEN HALL was a quaint, old, red-brick house, with jessamine and wistaria, roses, and Virginia-creeper trailing and climbing from roof to basement, and surrounding the house with a belt of sweet odours, and with the soft hum of velvety bees. A cheery, sunny house, through the open windows of which might be caught peeps of bright, chintz-covered furniture, sunny landscapes in broad gilt frames, flowers in china stands upon the tables, flowers in wicker stands upon the floor before the mirrors, flowers, flowers, and always more flowers.

"A cheery place," was Mr. Butterby's comment when visitors waxed ecstatic over the beauties of the warm, comfortable house, and well-kept gardens. "A cheery place! Not picturesque—no, no; there is nothing picturesque here. I always say to Nellie, that's my niece, 'Buy what you like, Nellie,' I say—'please yourself, but shun the picturesque; keep the place in order.' I can't bear to see a place going to the dogs. Picturesque, indeed! No, no. Nothing picturesque for me." Æsthetically-minded visitors were apt to raise their eyebrows at this point. "And Nellie is a good girl. She never forgets my wishes, and she is always as bright as a sunbeam."

Mr. Butterby was wont to grow warm when descanting on his niece's perfections, but when the niece appeared in sight, even

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the weary listener forgot his fatigue, and endorsed each word of praise.

Nellie Normanby was the only child of Mr. Butterby's dead sister, and had lived with her uncle ever since she was two years old. Now, in her nineteenth year, she was a bright-haired, round-waisted girl, possessed of a good deal of straightforward common-sense, a good deal of dignity and resolusion, and a good deal of wilfulness. But, after all, these points were but so many side-points in her character, and the main point, the leaven which leavened the whole lump, was a thoroughness which stamped each word and deed, and which left no doubt as to her ideas, her opinions, or her interests. With her, sunshine was sunshine, bright, and joyous, and dancing; laughter was an act which blessed both him who laughed and him who heard; while the rare tears were the sign of a mortification and grief passing the bounds of woman's endurance. It seldom happened that any one presumed on her good nature; but on those rare occasions she was apt to display a quiet gravity which crushed the offender. And then, perhaps, that astounded sinner would go away, and speak of her as being haughty and disagreeable. Disagreeable! with those sensitive lips, and that impulsive, loving heart. No, indeed. Proud she might be, but uncivilly disagreeable, never.

She had no memories of the father and mother who lay side by side on the sunny slope of the old churchyard. As soon as she was old enough to understand her loss, she undertook the charge of the narrow flower-borders round their graves; but she was a healthy-minded girl, whose religion was devoid of poetry, and she did not mourn a loss which she did not feel. And being also one of those bright, active girls who not only like to manage their own affairs, but who consider that they manage them extremely well, she and Uncle Sam soon learnt each other's ways and views, and lived out the years together in unbroken harmony.

Mr. Butterby, too, was a happy-minded individual, not given to fretting anxious thought for the morrow. He knew that his niece would "come into" two thousand a year on her twenty-first birthday, and he intended to make further provision for her at his death. So her future was assured; and the only matter still undecided, the name for which she would change her own. Well! Mr. Butterby was a wise man, and, after much meditation on the subject, he said aloud, to his reflection in the shaving-glass: "If that young woman cannot choose for herself, at least it is pretty certain that no one else can choose for her."

But, for all his philosophy, he was, as he was wont to observe to himself, "by no means such an old fool as some young fools considered him;" and he took uncommonly good care that none of the ne'er-do-weels of the county should set foot inside Harden Hall. His jewel should not be stolen if a surly watch-dog could ensure its safety.

Giles Grimshawe was one of his bêtes noirs, a plausible young fellow, whose handsome face and winning ways caused Mr. Butterby to draw himself up, and to stiffen as if he had swallowed the poker. Giles Grimshawe was well aware of this poker-swallowing, and he swore that he would "make Old Sam look alive;" but, in spite of feints and strategies, endless and well-planned, he had not yet penetrated into the treasure-house.

And Old Sam said with a chuckle, that "Some of the old fools could beat the young knaves yet;" also, that he had not slaved all his young days among the coal pits in order that a graceless Grimshawe might squander his money upon race-courses. "I may be a self-made man," he said, "but at least I am an honest one; whereas, who ever knew a Grimshawe that understood the force of the eighth commandment?"

Giles Grimshawe's cousin, the Honourable Jim, also made up his noble mind to throw the handkerchief to the pretty heiress, and was not a little amazed to find that she simply did not understand his long-winded compliments, and appeared utterly indifferent to his presence. Indeed, it once happened that, after paying a somewhat lengthy afternoon call, he overheard Nellie sigh deeply—he was detained for a moment in the hall, and the drawing-room door had not been firmly closed—and then exclaim, in the words of the weary turnspit: "Even the biggest leg of mutton must get done in time! but oh, Uncle Sam, what a big leg of mutton this has been!"

The Honourable Jim was sorely exercised when he reflected on this little speech during his homeward ride.

However, besides these and other suitors, eligible and ineligible, there was one who, during the past month, had come frequently to the Hall, and who, by his courtesy and tact, had completely won Mr.

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Butterby's heart; though it is needless to say that that was not the heart, the search for which brought Roger Marlowe from Swendon Chase to Harden, a matter of five miles as the crow flies, but a good nine miles by the road.

On unexpectedly coming into the property some two years previous to this date, he had given up the chambers which he had used in his briefless barrister days, and, after settling affairs at the Chase and establishing a steward there, he had joined a friend on a trip to the Rockies, and, for upwards of two years, the neighbourhood of Swendon knew him no more. Of course, the tales which were circulated as to his doings were as countless as they were improbable. Some said that he had been killed in an encounter with a grizzly; others, that he had headed a mission to the South Seas; while others, again, spoke sadly of the fact that he had opened a saloon in San Francisco. But all agreed to shake their heads at mention of his name, and to prophesy a speedy and evil end for the man who chose to live his own life independent of the opinion of others, and who showed so clearly that he cared no straw for the gossip of Clayshire.

However simply and quietly a man may live at the other side of the world, still, while he is at the other side of the world, it is quite safe to slander him a little, and to hope—with a little quiet malice—that a compulsory diet of husks may prove some day to be wholesome and humbling.

Nellie devoured all these tales with interest and with a longing, that she could scarcely keep in check, to spring up and to applaud the prodigal. The more she heard of him the more she longed for his return. He must be so interesting she thought, so different from all the quiet humdrum squires and parsons among whom she passed her days. And sometimes, when at afternoon tea with the Rector's sister, Lesbia Godalming, the latter lady would lift her hands in horror at the last bulletin, Nellie's eyes would dance with fun and mischief, as she said demurely:

"It's very sad to be so bad! Now, ain't you glad you're not so bad? Never mind, Lesbia; when he comes home again, you and I will convert him. What fun it will be!"

At last he came home.

And the first time that Nellie met him, all brimming over with curiosity and expectation, she thought: "Oh, dear me! he doesn't look a bit wicked." And all the sparkle died out of her eyes. It was a great disappointment.

However, the second time that they met—it was at an archery-meeting—she somewhat altered her first opinion, and thought:

"Perhaps, after all, he is rather bad. I am so glad that I had on my new hat."

And, after their third meeting, when he took her in to dinner at a neighbouring house, she came home with soft, happy eyes, and a fixed resolve.

"Poor fellow! How sad he looked when he told me of his neglected childhood. Well, it only shows what a noble character he must have, to be so nice in spite of all those early disadvantages. I am glad that he is coming to tea to-morrow afternoon, and then I will begin at once to convert him. No, I don't think that I will invite Lesbia, for she is so strict that she might alarm him at first. And the first step is of such great importance," added this small sage, wisely. And then she began to think whether she should order tea or coffee for this momentous interview.

Sir Roger came next day, and, with some slight diffidence, Nellie began her work of conversion. She was not quite sure, in fact, she was very hazy, as to the nature of the terrible things that he must be converted from; but the words "A saloon in 'Frisco," sounded bad enough to cover any amount of possibilities. And, at least, it was easy to tell the owner of an estate that it was his positive duty to live at home upon his estate, and to preserve the game, and to prosecute the poachers. Nellie very nearly said "to persecute the poachers;" and the knowledge of this slip made her so hot and confused that she quite forgot to enumerate all the other duties of an English squire. So that Sir Roger, whose face had hitherto been so perfect and grave a mask that it hinted at certain muscles kept sternly in check, now allowed these muscles to relax into a smile that was full of quiet humour. And before Nellie recovered her composure, he turned the conversation into another groove; so that presently she found herself listening with rapt attention to a relation of the struggles of his boyhood and early manhood; to those days when he thought that he should have to carve his upward way with unflagging labour, upheld only by the determination that his life should not be ruined by expectant waiting for dead men's shoes.

How Nellie admired him! He talked on quietly, half-musingly, with no intention

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of asking pity, but because her sympathy proved irresistible to him, and because it pleased him to watch the lights and shadows that came and went upon her upturned face. And more than once that curious instinct of comradeship proved too strong for her, and she burst out, impulsively:

"Oh! I am sorry for you! How dreadful for you! How could you bear such hardships!"

Somehow, the conversion did not proceed any farther that day; and when he left, after promising to ride over next day with some ferns, she quite forgot that he was a prodigal, and that society in Clayshire did not know how or where he had spent the last two years; quite forgot her rôle of monitress; said: "I hope you will come here again;" and said it as if she meant it.

Sir Roger rode over the next morning to say that he feared he had lost the promised ferns. And, as it was a lovely summer morning, he and Nellie strolled about the garden, and indulged in a little more conversion and a great deal of chat.

And then the next morning he came again, to say that he had found the ferns, and that, perhaps, it would be well if he showed Miss Normanby how to plant them. Miss Normanby had on a most becoming frock that morning; and she also thought that it would be well if Sir Roger were to show her how to plant the ferns. By this time she had lost all her first feeling of shyness, and had almost forgotten that he was a prodigal. He was so extremely pleasant.

They wandered up and down the trim gravel paths, where never a weed dared to raise its unbidden self. They examined the sun-dial, and removed an infinitesimal tuft of moss from its face; they visited the kennels, where the live dogs yelped, and the graves where the dead dogs lay.

"Poor beasts!" said Roger.

"They were my friends," said Nellie.

"Then they had some luck," said Roger.

They picked up the fallen fir cones and arranged them in a pattern round the calceolaria bed. They dallied and dawdled in the September sunshine, discussing matters grave and gay, and disposing of each in turn with the satisfying conviction that their opinions were unassailable. And one of them thought that life was sweet, and that the world was peopled with the great and good; that threescore years and ten were but a sunny stretch, undimmed by mist or shadow; also that an hour with a prodigal was worth a twelvemonth spent with other people. And the other one thought—but no—Roger's thoughts were locked in his own bosom. Perhaps, however, Nellie guessed their purport, for she suddenly grew very dignified and proposed a return to the house.

Mr. Butterby heard their voices as he sat at the library window, and he rumpled his hair and sighed with perplexity.

"He's come at last," he said, dismally, "he's come at last. Now I wonder if he is good enough for her."

Thus the ball was set rolling. At first it seemed as if its course was down a smooth, inclined plane, and so rapid was its progress that the conclave in the servants' hall—those lynx-eyed judges of their superiors—had already decided that the wedding would take place before Christmas; when suddenly there was a check, and Nellie thought that the sun of her life was eclipsed for ever and ever.

It happened thus: Nellie came down to breakfast on this particular Thursday morning, with her bright hair dressed, maybe, a thought more carefully than usual, and with a vast amount of bustling activity. She had reason to suppose that Sir Roger would appear as usual about midday, and she intended, before his arrival, to arrange afresh all the flowers in the fantastic china bowls, both in dining and drawing-rooms. So she appeared at the breakfast-table rather earlier than usual, and was ready when the postman arrived to unlock the letter-bag and distribute its contents. There were two letters for herself upon various unimportant matters, and there was a third in a writing, which, by this time, she had learnt to know very well. She opened it with dignified deliberation—have you ever seen a pretty girl at the instant when she opens her lover's letter? there is no prettier sight on earth—and read:

"Swendon Chase,
"Wednesday, September 2nd.

"Dear Miss Normanby,—Will you and Mr. Butterby dine here on Friday evening at eight o'clock? My aunt, Mrs. Colquhoun, and her daughter arrive that afternoon, and I am inviting a few friends to meet them. I hope to call at Harden to-morrow morning, but I send this note at once, as I should be sorry if meanwhile you formed any other engagement.

"I think that you will be interested to

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meet Mrs. Colquhoun. She has travelled a good deal, and is enthusiastic about ferns. Yours sincerely,

"ROGER MARLOWE."

Here Mr. Butterby appeared, and was told of the invitation.

"Of course you will send an acceptance," he said.

"Shall I? I think it is hardly necessary to do so, as he says that he is coming here this morning. But I will do as you wish. Samson, tell Harding to saddle the pony. I want him to ride at once to Swendon. Or stay, I will write the answer now, and you can take it round to the stables. See that Harding starts without delay. There, that is finished. Now, uncle, will you have another cup of coffee?"

Mr. Butterby finished his breakfast with less alacrity than usual, and retreated to the library with what was almost a dejected air.

"It is coming," he said to himself. "There is no doubt about it. He is going to do it. And she will say yes. I am sure she will. She has bought more new finery in the last month than she had bought in the previous half year. Yes; it is coming. And she'll say yes. Eh, dear! after enjoying Nellie's companionship all these years, it will be hard to live alone. There she is in the garden, with a rose-bud tucked in her belt. She's going to say yes. Eh, dear! there can be no doubt about it."

Meanwhile, the object of this soliloquy was very busy watering her pet plants, and picking such flowers as she needed for her china bowls. She caught a glimpse of her uncle through the library windows, and waved her hand to him. Then she wandered away to the veronica-bushes, at the edge of the lawn, and a half-tamed squirrel sprang down from a fir, and followed her with short, swift runs and bounds, now stopping short with uplifted tail and eager, suspicious eyes, and now coquetting from bush to bush, advancing and receding, as the promptings of fear or greediness dictated; dashing into the sunlight as Nellie's offered bribe appeared more tempting, then running up some gnarled trunk, as suspicion again assailed him. And Nellie, growing eager with the sport, flung aside her hat, and laughed, and continued her temptation with increasing zest. The sunshine streamed through the branches upon her sunny hair; the bees flew and hummed among the veronica-bushes; and a man who was crossing the lawn, paused involuntarily to feast his eyes upon the picture.

Suddenly she saw him standing there, and instantly bees and squirrel were alike forgotten; for had not he come again to see her, and was not a new glory added to the glories of this perfect September day? He came forward to meet her.

"Well!" he said.

"Good morning," she said, lightly. She wondered why he looked so pale, and why he switched so nervously at the bushes with his riding-whip.

"Well!" he repeated.

"Oh, don't spoil my veronicas!" she cried, hastily, as one of the blossoms fell to the ground.

"Never mind that rubbish," he said, hastily. "Nellie — Miss Normanby — do not trifle with me. What is your reply?" He bent forward, and gently took her hand.

"What on earth do you mean?" she asked, in half-amazement, half-alarm, for his manner bewildered her.

"Did you not receive a note from me this morning. I posted it yesterday."

His brow was crimson now, and he watched her face intently.

"Certainly; I sent Harding off with the answer about an hour ago."

"And—you—Nellie, Nellie, give me a favourable answer. Say yes, Nellie."

She shrank back a little, and looked at him with quite serious dignity.

"Certainly," she said, gravely, "I shall be very pleased—— Sir Roger! what do you mean? Are you mad? Let me go!" for he had slipped his arm round her waist, and was kissing her, raining down passionate kisses on brow and cheek, until, with her disengaged hand she thrust him from her, and, with a dexterous movement, freed herself from his arm.

"But—Nellie——!"

"I'm not Nellie. How dare you call me Nellie? Are you mad?"

"But, Miss Normanby, if I am not to call you Nellie——"

"Don't speak to me," with a furious stamp. "Oh, you are the horridest man that I have ever known! Why don't you go back to your South Seas and your grizzly bears? And I'll not come to your house to-morrow night. I won't. I said in my note that I would dine with you, but I won't. You horrid, unconverted man!"

An angry light stole into his eyes.

"But, Miss Normanby——"

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"No; I won't listen to you. And I won't dine with you to-morrow. Dine with you! I would rather have my dinner on the door-step, than sit at the same table with you."

"Then I will bid you good morning," he said, gravely. His lips were compressed and his eyes were hot and proud. He raised his hat and walked away stiffly and determinedly, with an assumption of leisurely indifference.

Presently she heard him mount his horse and gallop down the avenue. The colour faded from her cheek, and, with lips apart and straining ears, she stood listening, listening, until the sound of the horse's hoofs died away in the distance. And then she turned and looked around her with puzzled, weary, piteous eyes. The squirrel ran along the branch at her head, and invited a renewal of their game; the bees hummed around her as before; but the glory of the day had fled; the sunlit path between the veronica-bushes was no longer the high road to the earthly paradise.

Roger moderated his pace after a while; but it was some time before he could collect his thoughts. Seldom before had he been so startled; never had he met with such a rebuff. He knew himself guiltless of any wish to offend, and the past scene perplexed even more than it angered him. "Why did she fly out at me in that way?" he thought. "What on earth is at the bottom of it all?" The more he thought of it, the greater grew his perplexity. Then his horse lost a shoe, and he led him to the village smithy.

"I will stroll on towards Swendon," he said. "Tell Reuben to follow with Paragon as soon as the latter is shod."

Then he lit a cigar and walked slowly away till he had left the last cottage behind him, and arrived at the knoll, where stood the old Saxon church. Here he paused, and, shading his eyes with one hand, turned to look back upon the Hall, the casket which held the coveted jewel; and he wondered afresh at the past scene and its unexpected results.

"I will think the matter over again," he thought. "First of all I write to her, and tell her that I love her as much as any man ever loved any woman. And I add that, if she will marry me, I will do my best to make her happy. I know I am not half good enough for her; but, still, I do think that she has treated me very badly this morning. Well, I posted this letter at the same time that I posted another note inviting her and old Butterby to dinner, to meet Mrs. Colquhoun. Surely she can't object to meet Aunt Laura. It is not as if she knew her already. I could quite understand any one objecting to meet that lady a second time; but Nellie has had no experience as yet of her tongue—— Where was I? Oh, I posted both letters, and this morning I ride over to Harden to hear my fate. She receives me quite pleasantly, but as calmly as if I were in the habit of proposing to her every week. 'You got my note?' I ask. 'Certainly,' she says. 'And you will give me a favourable answer?' 'Certainly,' she says. Now, at this point, I had expected some little hesitation; but she spoke up as freely as if I had offered to peel an orange for her. Then I think—'Come, it is my turn, now!' and then—she flies at me, till I am completely dumbfounded. What on earth am I to think of it all? 'You horrid, unconverted man!' she said. Now what did she mean by that? I am not a Turk nor an Infidel—— Hullo, Reuben, so you have managed to bring Paragon so far without a mishap?" The small boy grinned delightedly. "By the way, how is your brother getting on? I mean your brother Jonas, the one who was underkeeper under Sir Thomas Roby's man?"

Reuben grinned from ear to ear.

"Jonas—he left Sir Thomas a year ago, sir. He could not stand Sir Thomas's tantrums, sir; so he got took on as postman. You'd have seen him pass this way, sir, about this time, but he's late this morning. He thought he'd left all the letters at the Hall as usual; so, after he had rested a bit, he picked up the other letters at Mrs. Hoggins's Post-Office—her that keeps the bacon and candy shop, sir—and he was just about to tramp it back to Miverton, when he ups and he says, 'Blest!' And Mrs. Hoggins, she says, 'Is it the colic?' And he says, 'No,' says he. 'It's not the colic; it's Miss Nellie's letter,' says he. 'Why, I left one letter at the Hall this morning for her; 'twas addressed as plain as could be, and the postmark Swendon. And now here's another for Miss Nellie in the same writing, and with the same postmark.' And then he was off to the Hall as hard as he could lay legs to the ground; for there's none of us but would be sorry to ill-convenience Miss Nellie; and Jonas he were main put out to find he had not delivered the letter this morning with all the others. Yes, sir, Paragon he come

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along quiet enough, and he—— Thank you, sir. Good day, sir."

So this was the reason of the explosion.

Roger leant against the churchyard wall, and whistled.

"So that was how the mistake arose. Well, she will have got my letter by this time. I wonder what she is doing. I think—I almost think that I will ride over again this evening. Ah! just you wait a bit, pretty Miss Nellie. Won't I have my innings this evening!"

Could Roger have been transported at that moment to the Hall, he would have seen a sight to overjoy him. A girl down on her knees in the utter abandonment of grief, with a letter spread open before her upon a big arm-chair, now reading a line, and now indulging in a fresh burst of tears.

"So that was what he meant. Oh dear! and how could I know it? I thought he meant, did I accept his invitation to dinner. Why did that stupid postman overlook just that one letter? Oh dear! oh dear! And I flew into a passion. And he meant would I marry him, and I did not know it. And he will never, never come near me again. And there is no one as nice as he is. And I said that I would rather dine on the door-step than sit down at the same table with him, whereas, I would black his boots if he asked me to—I would! I wish I were dead!"

When the gong sounded for luncheon, Mr. Butterby went as usual into the dining-room expecting to find his niece in her place at the head of the table. But five minutes passed, and, contrary to custom, she did not appear. Another five minutes passed. The butler's face assumed an expression of serious displeasure; time-honoured habits of punctuality ought not thus to be broken. Then Mr. Butterby began to fidget.

"Send Miss Nellie's maid to see what is the matter," he said; and Samson went off to report the unusual delay to the kitchen conclave. Presently the maid returned with the reply that Miss Nellie said she had a headache, and would Mr. Butterby excuse her from appearing at lunch.

Nellie with a headache!

Samson stood aghast for a minute, and then coughed a little, respectful, disbelieving sort of cough. An old family "treasure" knows a good deal, and is not easily imposed upon.

"It is impossible!" said Mr. Butterby. "Miss Nellie never has a headache. She has far too much common-sense to permit any such folly."

Still, his looks were not as assured as were his words; and he rumpled his hair as was his wont in moments of perplexity. And then he stole away upstairs to Nellie's door, and turned the handle softly. The door was locked; and from within might be heard sounds of such woe that poor Uncle Sam grew pale with dismay. What had happened? Was it possible that she had accepted Roger, and that she was now wishing that she had not done so? He stooped down and spoke through the key-hole.

"Nellie," he said, "what is the matter, my pet?"

Back came the half-choked answer:

"Oh, do go away, please."

He could hardly believe his ears. "This beats everything," he muttered; and he returned to his luncheon in greater perplexity than before.

At last Nellie ceased to cry, and rang the bell for her maid to fetch her a cup of tea. She was worn out, and had arrived at that state of exhaustion when her only wish was to be left alone. Her head throbbed, and her eyes were swollen and half-closed. So the news that her uncle had persuaded a friend, Mr. Capel, to remain the night with them, was not news to delight her. As soon as her maid left the room, she crept to the glass to see what sort of spectacle she presented. And perhaps, though she did not know it, it was a sign of returning vigour that she should be so shame-stricken at the object which met her gaze.

"What would Roger think if he saw me looking such a fright as this?" And then her lip quivered. "He would not care any longer. If I had a red nose for ever and ever, it would be all the same to him."

Presently an unusually meek-looking Miss Normanby left her room, and had there been any one present to notice her movements, that person would have been struck by the way in which she loitered in the dim corridors, and then hurried across the brilliantly-lighted hall. What a long and dreary performance dinner seemed to her that evening, and how thankful she felt when at last she could escape from her uncle's pitying glances, and from Mr. Capel's anecdotes and witticisms.

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Even in the drawing-room she could find no moment in which to rest and enjoy the luxury of a "miserable think," for the Rector and his sister arrived almost immediately, and Nellie was obliged to make one at the whist-table. She asked her uncle to play with Lesbia, against Mr. Capel and the Rector. But Mr. Butterby would not hear of this. He murmured confidentially to Lesbia:

"The child needs cheering-up."

Whereupon, that tactless, unselfish woman instantly declared that she did not want to play that evening, and begged to be excused. So Nellie was forced into the game.

Mr. Capel was a member of a whist-club, and prided himself considerably upon his play. He would sooner, any day, lose his dinner than lose his rubber. Therefore his disgust was great on finding that Nellie — "that young girl" — was to be their fourth; and this disgust was not lessened on his host saying:

"Wait a bit, Capel. Don't cut for partners. That's not the way we do here. Nellie and I always play together. Old partners, arn't we, Nellie?"

Mr. Capel's disgust might have vanished, and he might even have relished the game, for the Rector was a reliable partner. But he had not bargained for whist according to his host's notions. Mr. Butterby said that a game was something intended both to interest and to amuse, therefore silence was unnecessary. He also said that he like to play in his own way. And this was his way:

"Got a better hand, this time, Nellie?" he would say. "'Pon my word, I don't think it is worth while for me to play at all, this deal; such a lot of diamonds as I have! and not a court card among them all."

The Rector and Lesbia were accustomed to this sort of remarks; but Mr. Capel snorted with rage.

"Surely, Butterby," he said, "you do not wish us all to know what you have in your hand?"

"Eh! what?" said the unconscious sinner. "I don't think it matters. Just look there—what! I won't show you, if you would rather not see them. Still, you know, it is an uncommon thing to have three knaves and—all right! all right! I won't say any more if you would rather not hear. Nellie, you begin."

There was silence for a few minutes. Then Mr. Capel said in an aggravated tone:

"Surely, Butterby—I beg your pardon —but I think you have revoked."

"Have I? Really? Don't stop for that. It doesn't matter this time."

Mr. Capel leant back resignedly in his chair.

At any other time, Nellie would have enjoyed adding to his aggravation, and would have humoured her uncle's whims. But, to-night, she was too depressed to be amused, and she played so carelessly that even the Rector remarked upon it. Lesbia, too, watched her with some anxiety, and while, apparently, engrossed in her embroidery, cast many a glance at the little wan face, which grew still more wan as the hours passed. Suddenly, irrepressible Mr. Butterby burst out again:

"I have got a much better hand, this time. Three aces, a king, and three, four, five—eh! did you speak?"

But by this time his guest was dumb with rage.

Lesbia bent over her work and tried to conceal her amusement. And Nellie, whose thoughts were far away, continued her aimless play, when, there was a ring at the front-door bell—her hands grew cold and her face crimson — footsteps in the hall—her hands were shaking now, and her face had grown pitiably white again. She heard her uncle and Mr. Capel wrangling over some point in the game—the footsteps approached the door—who was the butler speaking to in the corridor?—the door opened and some one came up the room until he stood behind her uncle, and opposite to herself. She heard Mr. Capel's slow, irritated:

"Surely, Butterby——"

And her uncle's triumphant rejoinder:

"I told you so, Capel. I told you so. Hearts are Trumps."

She heard Roger's quiet tones:

"Yes. Hearts are Trumps."

And she looked up to find his eyes fixed upon her.

"Lesbia!" she cried. "Take my place. I am tired. I cannot play any longer." Without waiting for a reply, she sprang up and rushed from the room. Where should she go? where hide herself? she did not care. Anywhere, to be alone. The drawing-room was open, and she dashed in; then, fancying that she heard pursuing footsteps, she opened the window and stepped out upon the lawn.

The moonlight flooded the open spaces, while, like a dark belt, the firs and beeches encircled the lawn with massive blackness.

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From meadow and paddock arose the shrill chirrup of countless grasshoppers; and on every side, from bush and flower, there floated forth the sweet and heavy scents of night. She stole on tiptoe across the lawn. The cool air refreshed her, and the stillness of the night filled her with a sense of rest that was not unmixed with wonder.

Presently, the drawing-room window was again flung open. She shrank into the shade of a fir. But, though love is said to be blind, Roger could see what he wished to see, and a few quick strides brought him to her side. She raised her hands with a little quivering, imploring gesture, and then buried her face in them.

"Nellie," he said, "are you angry that I have come back again?"

She shook her head vehemently, but made no reply. He drew a step nearer.

"Are you going to send me away again, as you sent me away this morning?"

"No—o," her tone was so low that he could scarcely hear the word.

"Nellie," his arm crept round her waist, "Nellie, my darling! only one more question—and—don't say 'No' to this one, Nellie."

"Roger," she said, shyly; "will you always be kind to me? always good to me?"

"I will do my best," he answered, gravely. "A man can do no more than his best." Then a smile stole into his eyes, and he added: "Perhaps I had better say one thing now. And that is, that, even if we do not always quite agree, still I cannot possibly allow my wife to dine on the door-step."

And Nellie said: "O—oh! Roger!"

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

BY ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning, at breakfast, I made the acquaintance of my pupil; during which meal I had the onerous duty assigned me of keeping her supplied with bread and marmalade.

She was a putty-faced, snub-nosed child, with large, round, staring eyes, and hair of the same hue as her father's, only with a dash more red thrown in. Altogether, not a prepossessing specimen.

I began, in the usual fashion, by asking her how old she was, with the ingratiating smile which one always assumes for the occasion; to which she replied, briefly, "Seven and three-quarters," as though she were a pair of gloves.

"And are you fond of lessons?" I asked, with an inanity for which I could not but despise myself.

A look of contempt, mingled with marmalade, was the only answer I received, and the conversation languished for a while, until my new pupil remarked confidentially:

"My last governess had a red nose, and her teeth took out, and wasn't pretty at all!"

I hardly knew whether to take this as a compliment to myself, as the tone rather implied, or as a plain statement of facts, until she continued, sucking her fingers, as a sign she had concluded her repast:

"My ma says it's a pity you're so pretty, because some one's sure to want to marry you, and make you miserable ever after."

Good gracious! I thought, what a remarkable child, and what a remarkable household this must be! Certainly, Mrs. Wild gave you the impression of being anything but a happy woman herself, and——

"And my pa said——" resumed this enfant terrible, viewing my discomfiture with calm satisfaction, and taking advantage of the opportunity to purloin a lump of sugar from under my very nose, with which she temporarily gagged herself.

I waited patiently, with a reprehensible and most unbecoming curiosity, until the obstacle had partially dissolved.

"And your papa said what, dear?" I asked, in dulcet and insinuating tones.

"She was a fool; and ma cried. But then, she always does cry, you know; she cries when I'm good, because she's afraid I'm going to be an angel; and she cries when I'm naughty, because she's afraid I'm not."

I felt that, even out of respect to myself, to say nothing of my employers, I ought to turn the conversation into another channel; but, again, my desire to know more of this peculiar household got the upper hand, and I allowed her to continue:

"Pa says that ma's quite welcome to go and be an angel, as soon as ever she likes, which is very kind of him, isn't it? only ma doesn't think so."

"My dear," I said, with an attempt at severity, "you mustn't repeat such things; it's very wrong, and I don't like to hear them."

"Then why didn't you say so before?" enquired the imp, quite unabashed. "You looked as though you liked it."

"You are a great deal too forward, for

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a little girl," I replied, magisterially, and as though I had not heard the preceding remark. "Little girls should be seen and not heard. Suppose you come and wash your hands, and then tell me what lessons you've learnt, and how much you know."

"All right," she cried, readily enough; "I like you, and if you like I'll" (I was afraid she was going to offer to kiss me, which offer in her present sticky condition I should have been loth to accept; for you cannot very well dispose of six slices of bread and marmalade without leaving a considerable deposit)—"if you like I'll let you feed my rabbit with a cabbage-leaf!"

I received this proposal in the spirit in which it was meant, and felt that we were friends. Later in the day, when my charge had been released from her unwilling tasks and betaken herself to some more congenial pursuits, I strolled out into the garden.

There was plenty of ground round the house, which, though carelessly kept, was not without its attractions. I discovered two mouldy-looking summer-houses and a small walled-in fruit garden, and was just thinking to myself what a pity it was they did not employ a boy, at sixpence an hour, to weed the paths, when, on turning the corner of a shrubbery, I came suddenly upon Mrs. Wild, sitting forlornly on a garden-seat. It was rather late in the year for her to be sitting out of doors, with only a Shetland shawl thrown over her head; but that was no business of mine.

I stopped, of course, as I came up to her, and made some sort of remark about the fineness of the day and the mildness of the weather for the time of year, etc.; whereupon, she made a motion with her hand, as though inviting me to a seat by her side, which invitation I was in duty bound to accept, in spite of forewarnings of toothache, and began to tell her what my pupil and I had been doing in the educational line. I did not feel the least awe of her, as I had sometimes done of other ladies under the same circumstances; indeed, as she sat there, blinking her weak eyes—out of which she seemed to have wept all the colour—and looking more faded than ever in the sunshine, while I told her that, though I had found Florence backward in some things, yet she was not at all dull, and other pieces of what I considered gratifying information to the parental mind, I felt sincerely sorry for the apparently down-trodden little woman, and tried to do all I could to cheer her up. Gradually I saw a little colour creep into her cheeks, and a faint look of interest into her eyes; and when I went on to tell her of the treaty of friendship sworn on a cabbage stump before the rabbit-hutch, she put out her hand and patted mine, half-timidly, half-affectionately.

From this I was drawn on to tell her of my own widowed mother—living all alone in a little house at Highbury, on an annuity which was smaller still. She did not say much, but listened in a way that encouraged me to proceed, while all the time her restless fingers were plucking and pulling at the fringe of her shawl. At last, when I had pretty well run myself out, she spoke.

"I do hope, Miss Morris," she said, "that, as Florry seems to have taken to you so, the dulness of the place won't frighten you away?"

"Oh, I'm never dull," I replied. "But, if you find it dull, I wonder you stay here."

This was rather a cool remark, by-the-by, on the part of a hireling like myself; but, so far from resenting it, she laid her hand on my arm and half-whispered:

"I can't help it; but you can—you can go away whenever you like, and there is no one to prevent you."

"Oh, well," I said, "of course, if it's your own house, perhaps you wouldn't like to leave it, and——"

She interrupted me quite eagerly:

"No, it isn't our own. He took it because he liked the situation—it's so lonely!"

There was a peculiar emphasis on the "he," and she seemed to take it for granted that I knew to whom the personal pronoun referred.

"I hate the place," she went on, excitedly, with a spot of vivid red appearing upon her cheek-bones. "But it suits him, and——"

Suddenly her voice broke off in the middle of the sentence, and as I looked at her in surprise, mingled with alarm, I saw the patches of colour fade away, her face became ghastly pale, even to the lips, which twitched convulsively, and again I saw that almost indescribable look of terror in her eyes, which seemed, as I had noticed at our first meeting, to be trying to see something behind her, without turning her head. Something, too, made me turn and look over my shoulder. Standing about a hundred feet away, and apparently not even looking in our direction, was the

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tall and rather stout figure of Mr. Wild, dressed in a light grey suit, and leaning carelessly against the gnarled trunk of a large apple-tree, with his hands in his pockets and his hat tilted over his eyes.

What could there be about the man, that without even seeing him, or knowing that he was there—for, as I have said, he was behind us, and there had been no sound or footstep to warn her that he was anywhere in the vicinity—could occasion such a marked change in his wife's demeanour? Or was it merely—what was more likely—only a coincidence, combined with an unusually acute case of nerves?

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG the other things which surprised me in connection with the strange household at Woodburn Hall, was the discovery that, notwithstanding the size of the house, there was, beyond the before-mentioned Martha Horrocks, but one other domestic, in the shape of a rough-hewn country-girl from the village—who skirmished among the plates and dishes, scrubbed floors, and was generally engaged for rougher portions of the housework; the other woman combining in her person the offices of housekeeper, cook, and lady's-maid.

In a large house and in a family where, judging from my own liberal salary and other signs of prosperity, there seemed to be no lack of money, this was very strange, and almost seemed to intimate a desire—for some good reason or other—to limit the members of the establishment to the smallest possible number. And why? I asked myself this question; but without being able to give any satisfactory answer. Certainly, the lady of the house was apparently afflicted with some nervous disorder, which was, at times, painful from its intensity, also, there was something peculiar in the relations between the husband and wife; though this I might, perhaps, not have observed, had not my curiosity been awakened and my interest excited by the strange remarks of my precocious pupil.

This same pupil of mine was certainly a most peculiar child. It was perfectly impossible, at any time, to prophesy what she might do or say next, and thus she kept me continually on the "qui vive." On the second Sunday after my arrival, I had the anxious duty assigned me of conducting her to church—Mr. and Mrs. Wild not going themselves. According to Martha Horrocks, whom I delicately interrogated on the subject, "Master never went to church; at least, hadn't been once during the four years they'd lived at the Hall; he generally stopped at home and played 'Meddlesome,'" as she called it. Which remark, I discovered, after considerable cogitation, had reference to the melodious Felix Bartholdy. What Mrs. Wild did, at any time, beyond twisting her nervous fingers and fidgeting with whatever happened to lie within reach, while her pale eyes seemed continually trying to see what went on behind her, I never could discover. Obviously, too, her husband's great musical powers afforded her no gratification; but rather the reverse, though, at the same time, they appeared to exercise some mysterious and compelling influence upon her, like that of an oriental snake-charmer, whereby she was drawn, wherever she might be, into their immediate vicinity. The first time I remember noticing this was one morning about a week after my arrival, when, having encountered her near the school-room door, I took the opportunity of giving her an account of Florence's latest peccadillo, which consisted of her throwing the ink-stand out of window on being requested to spell "camel" without a "k."

In the midst of my recital I heard the opening bars of Chopin's weird "Funeral March" come stealing down the wide staircase, and, with a sudden shudder, she left me abruptly, and, with scarcely a word of excuse, hurried away on the track of the music, as though the sound had been a summons she dared not disobey, rather than a pleasure she could not deny herself. This occurred more than once.

I do not know whether Mr. Wild—for some reason of his own—disapproved of his wife's apparent penchant for my society. At any rate, he did his best to prevent her having much of it; for several times, when she had crept stealthily into the school-room, after my troublesome charge had been tucked up for the night — in a manner that suggested at once that her presence there was not permitted, and would not be allowed, if discovered—in a short time there would come the clear ringing tones of the grand piano in the room overhead, and, with the almost invariable tremor and look of indescribable apprehension, she would shrink away and steal like a ghost up the wide staircase and into the room where her husband sat drawing soft or majestic harmonies from

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the keys of the noble instrument over which his fingers strayed.

I began very soon to feel an intense dislike, combined with distrust, of this stout, sandy-haired, apparently commonplace man, who generally went about with his eyes half shut, and who, for the first few weeks of my residence under his roof, vouchsafed me but the very slightest notice and scant civility; doing his best, by his manner, to impress upon me the fact that I was, in his estimation at least, a mere piece of school-room furniture, which could be replaced at will if unsatisfactory.

But to go back to that first Sunday when I escorted my young charge unwillingly to church. We were late, in consequence of her refusing to allow her boots to be put on—in fact, the first lesson was being read when we entered; consequently, we were a focus for the eyes of the whole assembled congregation, as Florence fell over two hassocks, and knocked down a whole row of hymn-books prior to taking her seat. Unfortunately, she also considered it her duty to make known to me the names of all those who happened to be in our immediate vicinity, together with as much of their private history as she was acquainted with, in a loud whisper, which must have been distinctly audible two pews off.

"That's Mr. Perkins, the grocer; he wears a white apron all the week, and comes to church in a shiny hat and kid gloves, like a gentleman." Or, "Look there!" with a violent nudge, "that's old Dr. Green; he wears a wig, and his head's all bald underneath, like a baby's—I know it is, because once——"

A succession of titters from behind gave evidence that these items of information had penetrated to other ears than mine. Scarlet with shame, I clapped my hand over her mouth and brought her last remark to an abrupt conclusion; so that I never knew how it was that Florence, from her own personal experience, knew that old Dr. Green's head was different to most people's. A green bonnet and feathers on the head of a lady immediately in front, next attracted her attention; and she was evidently about to unbosom herself on that subject, only, luckily, was deterred by a most portentous and hideous frown on my part, which had a beneficial effect, and she lapsed into silence, and, I fondly hoped, more becoming behaviour. Indeed, it was not until the congregation had settled themselves for the sermon, that my thoughts—which I grieve to say were of mundane matters, and had nothing whatever to do with the text—were suddenly interrupted by a presentiment of evil. I at once turned my head in the direction of Florence, who was supernaturally and alarmingly quiet—not even swinging her legs, or kicking the front panels of the pew. She was apparently engaged in extricating something from her pocket, with much care—something which stuck a little, and resisted her efforts.

Ah! ah! I thought to myself—bull's-eyes! and mentally confiscated them on their first appearance. But it wasn't bull's-eyes; for, the next moment, to my horror, she produced from that dark receptacle a dead mouse, which she proceeded to hold aloft by the tail, to the intense delight of the boys in the back seats, who punched each other in the ribs in ecstasy, and to the disgust of the more sober-minded members of the congregation.

There was a most unseemly scuffle, from which I emerged hot and breathless, but triumphant; a sudden jerk sent the obnoxious animal out into the aisle, where it lay until the pew-opener appeared with a shovel and removed the corpse. As I sank back into my seat, covered with confusion as with a garment, my eyes met those of a young man who occupied the corner seat of a pew on our right. There was a twinkle in his eye, combined with an abnormal expression of severity about the corners of his mouth, which showed that his sense of the ridiculous had been considerably excited by the above scene. He had a nice face, and I took an opportunity during the concluding hymn to examine it again. There was something aristocratic about the nose and chin, combined with a forehead which suggested intellectual faculties of no mean order. He passed us again in the porch as we left the church, and I asked Florence, who had a positive genius for gossip and acquiring information concerning other people's business, in a whisper, if she knew who he was. "Dr. Green's assistant, who makes the pills," she replied, promptly. How disappointing! A mere nobody, after all! But, somehow or other, I quite forgot to read the terrible child the lecture I had contemplated on the morning's escapade and the enormity of her conduct, until it was too late.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 42.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII. LOVE'S PITFALLS.

ELVA passionately loved her home, and the moorlands about it; the charm of varying lights and shadows appealed, without her knowing it, to that which was awakening in her now that she had reached the happy stage in life when control was no longer exercised over her doings. She was like a newly-freed bird that flutters hither and thither, before it thinks of alighting on a twig, so that it may fully realise its liberty. Amice was free to do all the good works she liked. She could visit the poor, and teach in the schools. But Elva rejected all these restraints, in spite of Mr. Heaton's suggestions, and Miss Heaton's plain words that, "It was a great mistake when girls thought of nothing better than pleasing themselves when they came out."

"I hate poor people," was Elva's answer. "I do them no good; I don't know what to say to them. I would give them all the money I have rather than be expected to visit them. I get more good by sitting on the moor for an hour, looking at the lovely things there, than by going into pokey cottages."

Miss Heaton, who thought visiting the poor was the highest ambition and the highest work of woman, often shook her head over Elva Kestell's sins, and she would talk to her brother about them, little guessing that though he always said, "Yes, Clara," and "Exactly so, Clara," in his heart he admired the wilful strength of Miss Kestell's determination not to be moulded into another Clara Heaton! Oh, those dreadful, deceiving beings called bachelor brothers! What do they not deserve? How bold they are to deceive their spinster sisters, and how cowardly, too, in the way they slink out of their stronghold when it is indefensible. Clara Heaton kept strict guard over her brother, being resolved that as he had not married before she came to keep house for him, he should not do so afterwards! He had passed the stage of fervour which had once made him think that a celibate body of clergy would be the highest blessing to England; now he was painfully conscious that Clara often reminded him indirectly of his past utterances, and he saw that she meant to keep him to his word.

Happily for Clara Heaton, Rushbrook Mills boasted of but few ladies. The lovely church in its wood of fir-trees, with its glorious outlook over vast expanses, was wife enough for any clergyman, thought the maiden sister; if Herbert did his duty to his church and his parish, that was enough object to last a man's lifetime. In her narrow way Miss Heaton was very determined; and, good and high-minded as he was, Herbert was a coward the moment his sister's neat bonnet, plain jacket, and unfashionable but useful skirts came within sight.

Miss Heaton had long ago reckoned up her enemies, and seen, or tried to see, where the greatest danger lay. There was the Honourable Betta up on the Beacon — no, there could be no danger from her — plain, shy, awkward, often required at home, and never saying much that was audible. There were one or two other young ladies who were living with aunts, or uncles, or widowed mothers. These were always in a state of adoring

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the Vicar, and were useful for church decorations, and for making up a week-day congregation. To these, Miss Heaton was kind and patronising, encouraging them just enough to keep them up to the pitch of doing useful work, but knowing exactly where to stop, for fear lest their open admiration of Herbert should lead to anything in the least unsuitable, such as working slippers for him, or offering to make him a surplice. They might go as far as book-markers for the church, and surplices for the choir-boys; further, they must not go. But, as a matter of fact, Herbert, good, innocent man that he was, never guessed even that book-markers meant more than helps to find places; and that choir-boys' surplices hid hopeless love; he would have been truly shocked had he divined the joy of stitching for him.

Miss Heaton was now quite happy about these young ladies; but as she had heard often of the enormities committed by young vicars, she never ceased her watchfulness.

Then there were the "Kestell girls," as she called them, and stray visitors at Court Garden. She had not yet decided in her own mind which constituted her greatest point of danger, whether habitual sight, or sudden enchantment. It was this knotty question that kept her mind so frightfully busy. Would Herbert succumb to long knowledge engendering love, or would some pink and white beauty steal his heart? Neither of these terrible catastrophes must be allowed; but, oh! the watchfulness required, the planning, the little deceits, the small subterfuges!

She finally settled that she had most to fear from Amice Kestell. Amice was good; and, but for her intense want of colour, very pretty; only she looked more like some beautiful marble statue, than real flesh and blood in the shape of a woman to fall in love with.

Still, Amice was constantly to be met with in cottages. She was loved by every man, woman, and child in Rushbrook Mills district, whilst Miss Heaton was feared. She was often, too, at church, though not with the regularity of the young ladies before-mentioned. Rather, she came like some angel, who, ruled by unknown laws, appears at uncertain intervals. On Amice, then, Miss Heaton concentrated her watchfulness, because she felt sure that Elva, who never went to a cottage, who thought chiefly of the things of earth, would never in the least attract her saintly brother Herbert.

Alas! for the genius of the cleverest of us when it comes to fathoming the opposite sex. When Clara so often remarked against the doings or the non-doings of that wayward Elva Kestell, Herbert always mentally found excuses for the fair sinner. He prided himself on understanding her, and on seeing all the good beneath the beautiful exterior. We must, of course, at once grant that to a man's mind there is much more likely to be unfathomed and hidden good in the heart of a beautiful woman than in that of a very plain one. In fact, quite unknown to himself, Herbert, from a certain charitable fairness in his character, was always finding excuses for Elva, whilst Amice, who needed none, and was never mentioned by Clara, came in for a lesser share of his thoughts. Indeed, he had an undefined feeling of strangeness and creepiness in her presence which in no way could lead to love.

Elva Kestell was like a new piano from the best maker—it wanted to be played upon to make sure of its tone, and till time and use had done their work, it was impossible to tell how much extraordinary worth it possessed.

Her nature had nothing artificial about it as yet; and surrounded apparently by every gift of fortune—health, wealth, and happiness—it seemed probable that she would sail happily with her rich freight into a pleasant harbour.

Such, dimly, were her own thoughts this lovely autumn afternoon, as, having taken her sketching things to her favourite stile, she had tried to express many things with her one brush, and had failed to make a picture at all resembling what she saw.

The afternoon was closing in. On the upland meadows spread out before her the cows were feeding as if this day were their last, for the shadows were lengthening and milking time was approaching. She had gazed at the distant forest land till she turned away impatiently, feeling that she could not take in the thoughts she dimly found there, and so looked towards the right, where she could catch line upon line of undulating country, pencilled out in milky blues and invisible greens, whilst here and there pale yellow patches showed where corn-fields or stubble-fields were announcing with their silent speech that man cannot live on beauty alone, but requires food also; in other words, that the needs of man's body have equal power as well as his spiritual necessities.

Elva threw her paint-brush on the grass,

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and, hiding her face in her hands, listened. The wind was bearing her a message over the moors, and the wonderful voices of the trees which interpreted the wind were plainly audible.

"Miss Kestell!"

She started up as if the call had been supernatural, as if she were bound to follow, as if the moment had come when her vision would become clear and her life full of expected promise. Up till now she had been, so it seemed to her, all failure. She had tried to write, and her efforts had covered her with secret shame. She had tried to find a voice in music, in drawing, in the deep love she bore to her father and her sister; but she was still unsatisfied, and now, in the pause she had made to listen, she had heard a message of greater fulness, of greater possibilities; and when the voice, for the first moment unrecognised, so low was it, had called her, she was prepared to follow. She rose up in all her beauty of colouring and young womanhood to find only—yes, only—Walter Akister beside her!

The revulsion of feeling was so great that she said not a word.

As to Walter Akister, now that he had made her get up and could see her in all the loveliness of her happy youthfulness, he became mute. He could not tell her that he had seen her from a long way off; that he had followed her stealthily, like a Norway hunter follows the track of the wild deer, and that for a moment he had stood by her side unperceived, and had felt that if only he could tell her all he was experiencing, Elva, who had never shown him the least attention, must give in.

Good heavens! but how could she know? The moment she stood up and confronted him, Walter's fierce, brooding, bad-tempered nature reasserted itself strongly. He was again the shy, wayward man, whom neither men nor women ever thought of liking or making friends with. The irony of such natures is dreadful; the passion they have no power to express—and which it seems some evil demon turns to hatred almost as easily as to love—is often stronger than in more happy-minded beings. Happiness for such people is only a name; if given to them, the draught seems to turn to poison as it touches their lips; and this is no exaggerated language. Something—the riddle of which is too complicated to solve—ties them down, not only to their misery, but to the misery of others; and yet, let us say at once, that Walter Akister, up till now, had been no man's enemy but his own. He seemed to be possessed of two natures, one full of passionate love and wish for enjoyment, and the other possessed of a strong determined force to frustrate the enjoyment of all pleasure and turn every cup of luscious wine into bitter vinegar.

For a few moments Walter had stood unseen by Elva, and had thought that if she would be his wife—let the probation be never so long—he would show her all that love and devotion could do for woman. He would teach her the depth of truest, noblest worship; but, suddenly, his other and stronger self asserted its presence. The evil cloud of doubt, of pride, of fancied wrongs, of perverse judgement, of obstinate imperviousness came down upon him, and he was dumb. As for Elva, when she had regained her power of speech, and with it a visible expression of impatience, she remarked:

"How you startled me, Mr. Akister! You might at least have——"

She did not know how to finish, and so sat down on the step at the foot of the stile, and began to collect her materials.

Her words were like so many daggers to poor Walter, as if in a vision you had been promised a sight of Heaven, and had, instead, been shown Dante's Inferno.

"I am very sorry," he stammered, leaning against the stile. "I ought, perhaps, to have let you know I was coming; but——"

He made a plunge, this being the most unwise thing he could do, when Elva, as he must have known, guessed nothing of his intentions.

"But what? I dislike being startled. I'm going home now; the shadows have all altered."

"But please don't go this minute; I want to say something to you."

Still, Elva guessed nothing; how could she, seeing that Walter Akister's manner was as cold and as surly as usual? He seemed to command her, even though his words were ordinary; and Elva disliked commands in any form.

"Then you can walk my way," said Elva, "or as far as I go," she added, thinking what a loss it would be if her lovely walk should be spoilt by the presence of that stupid, surly Walter Akister. "I think I shall find Amice down by the church; the evening service must be over."

This matter-of-fact way of viewing his

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presence once more upset Walter's calculations, but he was driven to his ruin to-day by his evil genius.

"I came down to spend a few days at home on purpose to see you, so you might spare me a few minutes."

"To see me!" exclaimed Elva, in a tone of surprise, and just a little mollified—for what woman can resist, on being taken unawares, the charm of being specially singled out, even by the man she hates, or worse, by the one she despises?

"Yes, to see you. You never seem to guess how often I do come home for this reason. Do you fancy it is for my father, who hardly knows whether we are in the house, or not? or for Betta, who——"

"What are you saying?" gasped Elva, feeling the colour mounting to her cheeks, and looking at the long stretch of moorland before she could reach the valley. Then her eyes wandered towards the Vicarage chimneys that peeped up above the firs. This was the nearest house, and she would go there.

"Don't you understand me?" he said, growing more surly, because more hopeless. "That ever since I've lived here I've loved you, and now that you are going into the world you ought to know it, because—there, I must say it—it drives me mad to see you talking to other fellows. Look here, Elva, I've loved you always since I've known you, and always shall. I shall ask you again and again. You don't love any one else now, but you may meet some one who you may fancy loves you, and then——"

Elva was too much surprised and too angry to interrupt this speech sooner, now, however, she found breath to say, as she stood still and looked fearlessly at her strange lover:

"I don't know how you dare speak to me like this, Mr. Akister; I never knew you cared about me—I never even guessed it—and let me say, once for all, I shall never, never love you, and certainly I will never marry you. Pray let that end the subject. And now, please, let me go home alone."

Elva steadied her voice and looked like a Queen commanding a subject; but inwardly she was frightened by the strange, terrible look on Mr. Akister's face. She felt inclined to cry, for her romantic ideas had received a great shock. She had fancied love coming in the form of all that was beautiful and lovely; but in this shape it seemed altogether dreadful. However, Elva was brave, and none of these feelings appeared on the surface.

Suddenly Walter Akister repented. He was angry with himself for having been so rude, so altogether different from his intentions. He could have knelt down at her feet at this moment and prayed for her forgiveness; he could have asked her to curse him if she could forgive him afterwards. But all this flow of repentance remained in his thoughts, because of his shyness and of his pride.

However, he was subdued and penitent enough, even outwardly, for Elva to see it. She breathed again more freely, and her limbs trembled less.

"Forgive me," he said, in a low voice, in which Elva could hear the tone of terrible dejection. "Forgive me! I was mad just now. But you don't understand what I feel, and what I mean. Will you forget my horrible rudeness, and remember only the cause?"

Elva's feelings were easily touched. Much of her charm was in that varying mood of manner and of expression of thought. She held out her hand, though without moving, for she meant to get rid of her lover.

He seized it for a moment, and then dropped it.

"If you mean nothing but forgiveness, I would rather not take it. Good-bye! You may forget all this, though I cannot. Remember, I shall never change. That night of the dinner-party at the Eagle Bennisons I found out that I must tell you. I couldn't bear to see that London fellow near you. I hated him."

Then, abruptly turning away, Walter Akister took the upward path towards the Beacon.

Elva continued her walk home in a new frame of mind. She saw nothing more of the beauty around her. She only knew that she was strangely moved, and very angry with Walter Akister except for his last words. Hoel Fenner suddenly appeared to her, when contrasted with Walter Akister, like a beautiful "preux chevalier." So clever, so courtly, so worthy of being admired. Strange that, in pleading his own cause, Walter had advanced that of the "London fellow." Half an hour later Elva tapped softly at her father's door.

CHAPTER VIII. PROUD OF HER NAME.

It was the day Mr. Kestell came home early from Greystone. He often did so

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now, leaving much to his partner; but on Thursdays he was usually at Rushbrook by four o'clock. The first thing he always did on arriving was to go to his wife's sitting-room, which, as we have seen, was the most luxurious place in the house. By four o'clock Mrs. Kestell had got over the fatigue of getting up and eating her luncheon, and was at her best, looking forward to her afternoon tea, which was brought in when she made up her mind to ring for it. At this time Symee was in attendance, and reading to her mistress.

"The best was," as Mrs. Kestell often said, "that Symee, having been taught well, and having always lived with educated people, could read well, and never dropped her h's."

By this Mrs. Kestell meant it was best for herself, and not for Symee, because the invalid could not bear to hear an uneducated intonation; it jarred her nerves.

When Mr. Kestell entered, Symee always put a mark in her book, and left the room; and then might have been seen the most tender, lover-like behaviour on the part of the old man, who, having married for love, had never, even to himself, allowed how little pleasure he had derived from his marriage.

"Well, darling," he said to-day—and it was only a repetition, with variations, of many past days—"how do you feel now? Does this warm weather try you? What a glorious autumn we are having."

The kiss he imprinted on his wife's still unwrinkled forehead was gentle and loving as a woman's; and the action of putting on her shawl, which had a habit of slipping off—sharing its owner's want of strength of purpose—was touching in its unobtrusive thoughtfulness.

But Mrs. Kestell was accustomed to all these attentions, and took no special notice of them.

"Well, yes, the weather is very trying, Josiah. I thought of taking a short drive after lunch, but I could not make up my mind about it, and now it will soon be too chilly."

"Wouldn't a little turn in the garden be good for you, if you took my arm?"

"Oh dear no. You would walk too fast. You don't half understand all I suffer; men never do. No, you had better not trouble yourself about me."

The injured tone came into her voice. One might have fancied her husband had asked her to go up the Matterhorn.

"Very well, dear; do just as you fancy. But really the air is delicious, and such a sky as there is this evening. I expect Elva is sketching. She seems to have taken to her drawing again lately. Your mother was a good artist. It would be odd if neither of the girls inherited it."

The mention of Lady Ovenden was, however, quite a mistake.

"Of course my mother had great advantages—the best masters and the best society—which my poor girls have never had. I believe it is that which makes Amice so quiet. She wants shaking up, and mixing with people—people of her own standing, I mean."

Mr. Kestell's face was troubled; there passed over his handsome, benign features a distinct look of pain.

"But what could we have done, dear? You know Elva never would go to school, or she could have been to the best; and Amice would not leave her sister, and then you have never been strong enough to take them about, and I could not leave you."

There was no shade of annoyance in his voice—only one of deep concern.

"I know all that, Josiah; but still it does seem strange that we, who are so much better off than the Fitzwilliams, cannot give our girls the advantages their cousins have."

"Shall we ask Mrs. Fitzwilliam to take the girls out next spring? I fancy that if we offered to pay for the house in town and all expenses, she would certainly not refuse!"

"I dare say not. Ellen never does make her ends meet, I feel sure; but I know what she would do: she would make her girls take the foremost position, and she is quite capable of making Elva and Amice play the rôle of poor cousins! That would never do. The best chances would be all for her plain daughters."

Mr. Kestell smiled a wintry smile, however. Money seemed to be able to do so little for him and his own people.

"Still, I fancy, Elva, at all events, wouldn't let herself be treated as a poor cousin! My little girl would make her mark anywhere."

"So would Amice," put in Mrs. Kestell, in an injured voice; though she was willing to find fault with her youngest daughter herself, she was jealous for her. "With her voice she would be asked out everywhere."

"If she would sing."

"How very unfair you are to Amice. You know she is not always in a mood for singing."

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"Yes, of course; I meant no harm, dear. Now, speak about yourself. Would you like to have another opinion?"

"Dear me, no; that last London man did no good at all; those great men are so conceited. They come down with preconceived notions, and never listen to one's symptoms."

"I thought he took such pains."

"Just because he asked such a high fee! That is like a man, really, Josiah; after all these years you might know better. Pray ring the bell for my tea. I suppose you will wait for the girls."

"No, dear; if you like I will have a cup of tea with you."

"Oh, no, I like to be read to as I eat; I digest better. If you ring, Symee or Amice will come."

Soon after, Mr. Kestell was slowly pacing his own room, plunged in deep thought, which, if judged by the weary look on his face, could have been nothing very inspiriting. Every now and then he murmured:

"I did my best for her, my very best. I said she should want for nothing. I could not give her health—everything else. Good Heavens, everything else!"

It was out of this brown, perhaps black, study that he was aroused by a knock at his door.

His "Come in!" brought in Elva. Here, at all events, was the bright spot of his life; and his whole face brightened.

"Papa, are you busy?"

"Never too busy to see you, dear; and, in truth, just now I was doing nothing."

He went to his arm-chair and sat down by the fire, for, as his wife said, it was getting chilly, and the fire had just been lit. The daylight was merged into a golden sky; the autumn afternoon was ending in exquisite beauty. Elva flung off her hat, and put down her sketching-bag as she approached her father. It did his heart good to see her perfect confidence in him; there was not the slightest fear of him expressed in her actions, only a certainty of finding sympathy, which seemed to make the blood flow more freely in his veins; for, if not embittered by thoughts of the future, or the past, this mutual confidence between parent and child is one of the most divine feelings man can experience. He saw that Elva felt perfect trust in him, and that her great affection, which made her feel herself his equal, and also made her look up to him, was an absolute reality. He, too, was quick to catch the tones of her voice, and he added:

"What is it, darling? Something is the matter. Not another novel, is it? Never mind, there are ways and means of getting any book floated. Sinnel told me that when I had my secret interview with him."

"No, no, papa; it is not that. I shall never write another novel. I mean, never one I shall want you to pay for. I see money is really of no use in such cases. Perhaps, after all, literature is the only real Republican thing in the world! We must stand or fall by the judgement of one's fellow-creatures; but——"

Elva felt shy and stopped short.

"What is it? No, not—love?"

The idea came suddenly, and seemed to send a dagger through him. He could not spare his Elva to another—the one joy of his life which had not disappointed him. Then, suddenly checking this spontaneous feeling, he thought only of his child's happiness.

"No, no; not love, but—oh, papa, don't tell any one. I can trust you. I know I can. You see, mamma is worried so easily. It's no use telling her; but you are never worried. You've always done everything for everybody. I do believe there is no one like you in all the world."

How her words warmed his poor heart; but he only gently pinched her ear.

"Foolish child, what a flow of words! But what is this great misfortune?"

"It isn't any misfortune; at least, I suppose not; but I felt so miserable, so frightened. Fancy my being frightened! But promise you won't tell."

"Word of honour." Then quickly he added: "But you can trust me, Elva, can't you, without protestation?"

"Of course. You're the most honourable man I know! You couldn't betray any one. Well, it's about Walter Akister. He—he made me an offer, and I felt as if I must tell somebody. Amice would be angry; but you—you will be just."

Mr. Kestell did not in the least realise the scene Elva had passed through, or he would not have taken her words so quietly. His sang-froid made her fancy she was silly to have been afraid, for Elva was not yet learned in love. It was her first offer.

"And you do not love him, child? Don't mind me; tell me the exact fact. I only want your happiness, Heaven knows! even though——"

He was careful of not giving his own opinion of young Akister before knowing if Elva loved him, and he paused.

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"No, no, papa; I don't love him; I can't bear him. He is so strange, so rough, so—— No, no, there's nothing in him that I like; but—I am sorry for him."

Mr. Kestell breathed more freely.

"Don't be in a hurry, dear. Remember his family is all that can be desired. He has rank and wealth. I know Lord Cartmel is rich—richer than if he had large estates; and though his hobby, of course, is very expensive, yet he is very just; he will not injure his children."

The hand that held Elva's trembled a little. She knew not why; and hardly noticed it.

"Papa, that is like you to be so good. I knew you would understand; but what do I care about rank and wealth? You always say we shall have enough. We are rich, aren't we?"

"Rich," said Mr. Kestell, quietly, in a low voice, as if half to himself, "there are so many ways of understanding that word; but anyhow, child, you need not marry for money. I hope I have prevented that; on the other hand, remember that Walter Akister cannot possibly love you for your money, there is no need of that. Only for yourself, my child."

"For myself!" said Elva, rising and standing in the half-firelight, half-reflected cloudlight. "Yes, I see that is a great thing; but, papa, I want to love, too. I know that I could love, only he must be more perfect than you are to make me love him better; and I never, never could love Walter Akister. Oh! papa; just think, who could?"

"I never, never could love Walter Akister." These words sank deeply into Mr. Kestell's mind. Why, he hardly knew, as they were most natural, considering the subject of them!

"And you are quite sure your mind is made up? What do you want me to do?"

"That is what I wanted to speak to you about. Perhaps it isn't very generous of me to tell you all this; if I hadn't wanted very badly to tell somebody, I would have kept it to myself, for Walter's sake; but it is safe with you. You must appear not to know it, papa. Don't mention it to any one, not even to mamma, if you don't mind very much, because——"

"Your mother has a right to know, Elva."

"She might think that—oh, you know mamma believes in the aristocratic people she came from. Our family, papa, wasn't so aristocratic; but just as good and noble, for all that! I'm proud of being a commoner; you believe me, don't you? I wouldn't be a lord's daughter for anything. One is more free, and then one can hold one's head just as high!"

The girl knelt down beside her father and put her arms round his neck, and laid her soft cheek against his furrowed face.

"Dear, dear papa, keep my secret, and you do believe me, don't you, when I say I would much rather be Kestell of Greystone's daughter than Lady Cartmel?"

Sometimes out of the mouth of babes come very sharp swords.

SOME SARDE SKETCHES.

My readers may surely be excused if they know nothing, at present, about the island of San Antioco. Were a man to travel through the world, visiting a fresh island every day of his life, from the time he is weaned, I suppose he would, even on an average estimate of longevity, die ere he had seen more than a tithe of the insular estates of our little sphere. Besides, San Antioco is too trivial to be noticed by any save the most generous of geography manuals. So that the youthful intelligence which could and would acquire a casual knowledge of a hundred islands in a day might, at the end of a year, throw its books into a corner, and declaim against the futility of all effort, because it was unable to capitulate the length and breadth, natural products, and population of this particular island.

San Antioco is a pear-shaped island on the south-west of Sardinia, and about thirty-seven miles in circumference. Inasmuch as one may go to it dryshod, perhaps its claim to be an island may be disputed. In truth, however, the bridge which carries the high road from Sardinia to the island town does actually cross a current of sea-water, which, however shallow, suffices to insulate San Antioco.

I left Cagliari—Sardinia's capital—for this little island on the day of Corpus Cristi. One gets so used to festivals of one kind or another in Sardinia, that even Corpus Cristi did not keep me from the fulfilment of my plans.

By May it is warm in Sardinia. Here, as in Italy at that time, the ordinary civility of a railway-car, or a diligence, demands constant iteration of the phrase: "It begins now to grow warm!" If a

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Southerner makes this admission, one may believe that it is really warm. In truth, the broad meadows west of Cagliari—level as a billiard-table—had changed from green to russet colour; and the spacious salt-marshes and ponds of the "campidano" glowed with a hot reflection against the cloudless sky. The mountains in the distance, whither we were going on our way to San Antioco, stood clear to the highest point.

There is nothing of absorbing interest to see in the vicinity of Cagliari. These great flats serve as breeding grounds for beasts and horses now, as in the time of the Romans; and now, as then, they breed plenty of fevers also.

After running through these hedgeless meadows for about an hour, we came to a village called Siliqua. The village is out of the way; but a bold castle on a rock, rising nearly nine hundred feet from the plain, catches the eye instead of it. The castle is that of Acquafredda (or, in English, cold-water castle). Of course it is a ruin in the nineteenth century. But it has had a very solid part in the drama of old Sarde life. One of its masters was the unfortunate Ugolino, the patrician of Pisa who incurred the enmity of his native republic, and especially of the Archbishop of Pisa, the infamous Ruggieri. Would you know more of this Ugolino, read the thirty-third canto of Dante's "Inferno." For he it was whom Dante found in the ninth compartment of Hades, with his teeth fastened in the nape of the neck of a companion. This companion, too, was none other than Ruggieri, the Archbishop, who starved to death, in a Pisan tower, Ugolino and his two young sons.

> You must know that I was the Count Ugolino,
> And this the Archbishop Ruggieri.

However, we have no time to spend at Siliqua, and this must suffice as a sample of its historical associations.

An hour more, and, having by this time entered the lower reaches of the mountains of Iglesias, we glide gently into the city of Iglesias. What a winsome place it is, under the warm, yellow light of the May evening! The mountains fall close to it, in rocky knolls clad with trees and herbs. One hill, which almost impends over the town, shows the ruins of the castle whence, five hundred years ago, the Arragonese overawed the city at its feet, when they had got possession of this, the first of their landed properties in Sardinia. The nightingales were singing betimes among the orange groves, as I walked up the street of white houses in quest of a bed for the night.

Iglesias is known, more or less intimately, to all mineralogists who have sought to turn their learning to practical account. The mountains around it teem with lead. Zinc is also plentiful, and the Romans, who carried shiploads of silver hence, have left not a little precious metal in the very ashes by which they separated the ore from the dross. Lead is the chief mineral product of Iglesias nowadays. In their search for silver, the Romans neglected the lead. They even left it in massy columns and ledges, isolated from the argentiferous matrix which they had removed. They seem, therefore, to have had no use for it. And the modern miners have profited prodigiously, both by their earlier labours and their considerate contempt for the baser metal. About a score of years ago, zinc was discovered in Iglesias. The excitement in the city was, thereupon, very great. Speculative foreigners from all parts of the Continent came hither; and a traveller, arriving by chance in the place, records that he heard no fewer than eight different languages at the supper-table of his inn.

The peasants round Iglesias all thought their fortunes were assured by this new mineral. Hundreds of concessions for rights to mine under their fields and vineyards were applied for in a year, and even granted.

Well, of course there was a relapse after a time. It is said that the chief sufferers were English. Our honest countrymen found the Sardes much sharper than they were fancied to be. The climate was another terrible trial. It was impossible to work during the summer without risking a fever of the most deadly kind. Thus, year by year, the English interest in Iglesias has lessened. At present it hardly exists. The engineers are mainly Italian; and the workers Sardes.

This little digression may explain the number of grimy and sallow men, clad in rags of a cosmopolitan kind, whom one meets in Iglesias. The mines are a few miles from the city; but many of the operatives live in Iglesias.

When I had ordered my dinner and a bed at the "Golden Lion," I went forth into the streets of the place. Though I had missed the processions of Cagliari, I was not to lose those of Iglesias. Following a crowd of dames in gala dress, I

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reached the Cathedral Square in time to join those already in the church awaiting the return of the priests and effigies, after their pompous perambulation of the city. Sardinia is very retentive in the matter of its costumes. The men in the country districts wear the same attire that their grandsires to the twentieth generation also wore. With the women it is their jewellery, and sundry more gorgeous personal garments — such as a bodice of gold or silver lace embroidered upon satin — which descend in like manner from mother to daughter. Iglesias is, perhaps, less famous than the "campidano" of Cagliari for the wealth of its ladies. Here, however, were no few dames of a picturesque and valuable kind. Their heads were draped with long silk kerchiefs, generally light-blue in colour, to their waists. The richer wore also a small scarlet skull-cap under the kerchief. The dresses were for the most part of vivid primary colours— silk, satin, or cotton, according to the opulence of the wearer. Gold ornaments were displayed wherever they would perch. Bracelets, brooches, ear-rings, necklets, with innumerable bangles hanging therefrom— these were, of course, the commoner kind of decoration. The poorest of the women, instead of a head attire of silk, wore blue flannel.

Imagine, then, the brilliant scene, viewed from the interior of the church—sufficiently filled already—when the ecclesiastics, with their banners and guilds, and a swaying mob of attendant peasants and others, the heads of the women blue, crimson, yellow, and white, presented themselves at the door, and prepared to march up towards the altar.

Of the guilds with the clergy I will only mention two or three companies. What think you of a troop of little boys in surplices, each carrying a white artificial Annunciata lily, and all marshalled in the train of one little girl, dressed like a bride, before whom a silken banner is carried? The damsel—a pretty, conceited little soul —plays the part of the Virgin, of course. As for the boys, they play many parts, whether designedly or not. The two leaders tickle the ears of the child-bride in front of them with their Annunciata lilies. The others tickle each other in the same way. Thus, all the way up to the altar, there is constant recrimination. The symbolical Virgin turns round with a look of childish anger, while she rubs her ear; and no sooner has she raised her little head aloft again, and reassumed the look of sanctified innocence which so entrances the simple country-folk, than the lily once more tickles her, and puts all her resolution to flight. The boys, too, war with each other, using their lilies as quarterstaves, until they are cuffed into order by the troop in the rear.

This troop is very vivid for colour. It is composed of about a dozen men in scarlet gowns, carrying lamps in their hands. The lamps have long handles, and are therefore admirably fitted for applying to the heads of the turbulent boys in front.

After the red men are men in gowns of white and black, carrying staves only. Older girls in white follow these men. Another company of boys, without lilies, in attendance upon a maiden of mature age, seem to symbolise the Virgin at a later period of her life. The Bishop of Iglesias, in crimson silk, canons in violet, and other dignitaries of humbler rank are the nucleus of this very engrossing spectacle. And when as many of the processionists have been crammed into the building as the size of the building will admit, the concluding part of the Corpus Cristi function takes place. What with the heat, the crush, the iniquitous behaviour of her lily-bearing cortège, and her futile attempts to comport herself with suitable dignity and sweetness of demeanour, the little girl whom I have already mentioned is reduced to such a state of distress that, before the end of the ceremony, she falls into tears, and disregards all her responsibilities. But, in fact, the exit from the cathedral is a mere scrimmage, so that her sorrow passes unremarked.

In the evening I strolled through the city again, to see if it continued to merit the stigma for drunkenness which of old it bore. Of beer-drinking there was little; but almost every other house in its narrow ill-smelling streets was arranged with portly wine-barrels and counters. Here in a gloom chastened rather than dispelled by a swinging lamp or two, were parties of peasants dining and card-playing with great gusto. But the cafés were still better attended; and in honour of the day a harpist twanged his melodious wires among the guests and confectionery of the principal of these resorts, while the fair ladies of Iglesias paraded to and fro in the cool between the cathedral and the palazzo of the Mayor. The only other form of dissipation that confronted me

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here was a paltry booth in the new square of the city. "The Beautiful American Lady" was advertised as the inmate of the booth, and as a marvel to challenge the world for her charms and strength.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, I took my seat in the diligence for San Antioco. The distance between the two places is about thirty kilometres; the fare, two francs. I mention the fare to show that diligence travelling in Sardinia is cheap. In this instance it was cheaper than usual, because, as my driver said with a sigh, he had a rival. Though he carried the royal mails, he was not to have the monopoly of passengers. A buff vehicle started five minutes before we started; and the sight of the buff coach, picking up travellers who ought to have waited for the mail, was enough to make any honest mailman grind his teeth.

The first ten miles of our journey was through a series of mountain gorges, the cliffs on either side of us showing innumerable galleries in which the miners were at work. The common signs of a mining country were also not wanting: precise banks of refuse from the borings; discoloured brooks; slouching workmen smoking the inevitable pipe; ruined or deserted hovels by the wayside. But here, all these indications of disturbance could not deprive the land of its beauty. The screes, a thousand feet higher than our heads, fell none the less precipitously for the burrows within them. Nor were all the olives and fig-trees, which at one time grew thick upon them, cut down or withered by the tainted atmosphere.

Ere arriving at San Antioco—which is visible across the plain of Sulcis and the intervening arm of the sea long before we reach it—I must really say a bad word for the blue and yellow diligence in which I was so unfortunate as to travel. Pretensions to comfort, it had absolutely none. It was of wood wholly. I believe its springs, if it had any, were wooden. Its cushions were certainly of wood, for it had none but the boards; and its dimensions were so small that a man of long legs and arms, and, therefore, with a high head, found himself perplexed how to stow his obtrusive body. One has, indeed, to travel in such a vehicle as if one were but half in it. By leaning with arms and shoulders out of the window, a certain compromise is effected; but, in time, the attitude gets fatiguing. And if there is any dust, it is but an exchange of one infliction for another.

Before entering San Antioco we skirted the sea where it throbs, lazily and shallow, upon the sandy shore of Sardinia, facing the island town. The plain of Sulcis is to the south of us: a flat area, parched already, with much poor barley on it, and many acres of marsh fast drying under the warming sun, and thereby extending the margin of dark consolidating ooze, which only too well suggests its malarious capabilities. This plain is about twenty miles long, by five or six broad. Two or three starveling villages are all the population it supports. The Saracens ravaged the district so effectually that, for centuries, it has been thus forsaken. Two or three prostrate granite columns — one column erect, but half-buried in the mire—and the solid remains of the old Roman road by the water-side are all the emphatic signs of the early inhabitants of Sulcis in Sardinia. San Antioco, itself, claims to be Sulcis proper; and, indeed, the architectural débris of the place bear out its claim.

The island has but two small towns: San Antioco, on the east coast, and Calasetta, to the north, facing the island of San Pietro. It is rocky throughout, though its highest point is barely nine hundred feet above the sea level. Where there is enough soil for the purpose, vineyards are formed; but the wine of the island is harsh, and not to be compared with the better wines of Sardinia. For the most part, the island hills are covered thick with juniper, lentisk, wild thyme, and cistus. Upon this brushwood the poor children of the town depend for their livelihood. They spend many hours of the day out on the hill-sides, garnering the wiry woodstuff for sale in the town. And sweet, indeed, is the odour of the San Antioco smoke from domestic hearths fed with such savoury fuel.

There is no inn in San Antioco. My reader may as well be informed of this. If I had space, how I could enlarge upon this fascinating theme; to wit, the pleasant hardships one has to suffer in the search and enjoyment of unprofessional hospitality. Here, however, a large lady received me into her house with a certain amount of amiable patronage. She made me much at home, gossiped with me as if I had known her from my infancy, told me about the Vicario's colic, the Lieutenant N——'s social gallantries, and her own relations' peccadilloes, prattled endlessly, in short; but gave me little to eat;

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and in the morning, with an air of ingenuous indifference, asked me to pay her a goodly sum. Then she genially shook me by the hand, wished me a "good journey," a "speedy return," and we parted.

But, in the meantime, I had at least a glimpse of life in San Antioco. There is a fountain by its beach, round which the lasses of the place, in gay attire, love to gather. Some wash clothes in its trough; others go thither with empty pitchers, and return bearing its water. But one and all are sturdy little pedestrians, and inimitable chatterers. By the fountain are Roman marbles of one kind and another; bits of temples and domestic dwellings. And within the latter-day houses of the little town are coins, pottery, scarabæi, and intaglios; spoil which the past daily renders up to the present.

Of all the wonders of the place, nothing is held to be more wonderful than its street of tombs. Tombs they were, really, more than two thousand years ago. The tufa of the hills has fallen into a series of natural grottoes, in which the Carthaginians of the first Sulcis laid their dead. Nowadays the dead are displaced; their treasures of gold and precious stones scattered among the museums, and their bones spread broadcast about the fields; and in their stead entire families occupy their sepulchres. The niches and coigns which held their bodies serve for pots and pans, the meal-sack, or the fodder which is to sustain the ass that grinds the corn, also within the inhabited tomb.

There is another of these grottoes under the Church of San Antioco, with extensive ramifications. Here, with lighted candles, we prowled for half an hour, among piles of skulls and other bones set in the corners, and over undisturbed tombs of bricked arches. In this very romantic hole, one sees the vault anciently occupied by San Antioco. It is furnished with a little iron grill; but, within, one sees nothing. For, early in the seventeenth century, the remains of the saint—by whom, or for what canonised, I cannot say—were transported to Iglesias for security. Since that time, and up to the year 1851, there was an annual carrying of the body to and fro between Iglesias and San Antioco on the festa of San Antioco. The junketing on these occasions was fabulous, and also the attendance. It was the custom to make the journey in two days. All the priests and people, and the effigies, and the skull of the saint in a silver casket, halted halfway for the night in a pleasant al fresco camp. On the third day, they returned to Iglesias, and the skull was enshrined on the altar.

In 1851, however, the people of San Antioco began to assert what they, fairly enough, conceived to be their rights. The saint was theirs. Why, then, should it return to Iglesias, whither it had been carried two and a half centuries ago, merely because the pirates, who then ravaged the land, might else have run off with it? Accordingly, they rose in arms, and opposed the procession when it reformed for the return march. The riot had to be suppressed by the Government. A lawsuit supervened, and this eventuated in the final repose of the relics of San Antioco in the church which was his first resting-place. "Tanti miracoli!" (numerous miracles) observed the sacristan of the church, in comment upon the efficacy of the saint. Surely the attempt of Iglesias to retain possession of the body was in no way different to the refusal of a pickpocket to resurrender a watch to the person whom he may have relieved of it.

The evening in San Antioco was tranquil and restful. With my entertainer's sanction, I sat on her doorstep, and watched the ebb and flow of life in the little square, while the glow of sunset glided over white houses, hill tops, and the sea. There had been a killing of tunny fish near the island that morning, and they were cutting up a fish or two in one corner of the square. Now and then a citizen came by, and passed me a civil word or two. A stranger is not common in San Antioco; but no one treated me as a novelty. One old gentleman dallied a little, while prating of the good features of his native town. When I asked him if it were healthy, he called the devil to witness that there was no place in the world to equal it. A centenarian was no luxury in the village. He himself had a relation whose years numbered one hundred and ten.

After this gossip came pleasanter sport. My hostess had a great-niece who was wont, it appeared, to come to her house to amuse herself with broidery work of the old style. She was a fine, dark girl, with merry white teeth, and no shyness. And so, for half an hour, while the light waned to gloom, her nimble fingers went to and fro on the frame between which her work was stretched, and she purled forth speech as continuously as the flow of

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a brook. She was weaving her bridal veil—nothing less. It was the custom for girls thus to employ themselves, whether or not they had certain prospect of playing the bride. And methought it a gracious and wise custom too. For the maid who is married in thought—as the weaver cannot but be—is assuredly only less married than she who is led to the altar. She has run up the gamut of expectation, and enjoyed the sweets of hope.

I asked the maid when her time would come.

"Who knows, sir," said she, "if it will ever come?"

Thus, you see, she had learnt some philosophy, and that I attribute to the broidery frame.

When it was quite dark, and the piazza was inhabited by voices alone, sundry enterprising citizens, with antiquarian trifles to sell, sent their daughters to offer them to me. What shrewdness such conduct implied! Among the treasures were rings of various kinds, set with Egyptian and Roman stones. Of course the rings had to be upon some one's finger to show themselves to advantage. And you may be sure the damsel who brought the antiquity had a finger to spare for the task. This went on for an hour, until my hostess grew cynical, and commented upon her fellow townsfolk and their craft.

"Jewels," she said, "were like faces. They should be appraised in the daytime."

And so, with masterful tact, she cleared the house; told me the moon was rising on the other side, and put the candle in my hands. This ended the day in San Antioco.

THE VIKINGS' GRAVES.

Very quietly they sleep,
Where the cliffs stand, grim and steep;
Where the shadows, long and cool,
From the side of great Berule,
Sweeping from the changing sky,
As the silent days go by,
Touch at last the ceaseless waves,
Thundering 'neath the Vikings' graves.

Fitting requiem do they make,
As they gather, roll, and break,
For the warrior-kings of Man,
Who, as only Islesmen can,
Loved the glory and the glee
Of the ever-changing sea;
Drew from her their stormy breath,
Sought her for the calm of death.

Very quietly they rest,
With the green turf on their breast;
Mace, and blade, and mighty shield,
Arms that they alone could wield,
Notched and browned by blow and rust,
Lying silent by their dust,
Who, in the sweet sunny Isle,
Held their own by them erewhile.

Chance and change have swept away
Relics of the elder day.
Like the tiny "Church of Treen,"
Ruins tell of what has been;
Times of prayer and praise devout,
Times of furious fray and rout,
Times of royal pageantry,
Passed away—and here they lie.

Solemnly, to quiet graves,
Rowed across the subject waves
To their last homes Vikings came,
With songs of triumph and acclaim;
Then Berule looked grimly down
On hero dead, on forfeit crown,
On chanting monk, and sail, and prow,
Even as he watches now.

"Peace," says the stranger as he stands,
Gazing o'er the golden sands,
Where, with endless crash and shock,
Breakers surge round Niarbyl Rock;
Where the sea-mews sweep and cry;
Where Fleshwick towers to the sky;
Where Bradda rears his giant head;
"Peace be with the Mighty Dead."

A GOSSIP ABOUT BIBLES.

We modern English care more for the Bible than do the people of any other country. British and Foreign Bible Society, Trinitarian ditto, Christian Knowledge Society—at least a dozen of them—printing and dispersing Bibles in various languages under cost price. It is our fetish; and the African chief in the well-known print, to whom the Queen is handing a copy of "the Book," looks as if he thought so. Unless he is altogether different from other African chiefs, he will wrap the precious volume up, first in red cloth and then in palm leaves, and tie it round with a bit of gold lace, only to be brought out and opened on the solemn occasions on which, in earlier days, the witch doctor would have been sent for.

Walk down a long street of small houses in the suburb of any thriving town. You can see into the front parlours, and every one is alike in possessing a small table, close to the window, covered with an "antimacassar," and on this a big Bible. Nobody ever reads it; there are others for general use. But the possession of the big book adds a sense, not of respectability only but of security to the household. It holds the place the Penates did in a Roman house.

Of old it was not so. For hundreds of years we were almost alone among European nations in having no translation of

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the Bible. We have had the Psalms for nearly twelve hundred years—since Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, translated them. Not long after him "the venerable Bede," "for the advantage of the Church," turned into English St. John's Gospel. He died, says the story, just as he was finishing the last chapter, in writing which he had been helped by a light miraculously streaming from his left hand.

King Ælfred, about A.D. 890, translated the part of Exodus containing the Ten Commandments; but not till sixty years later did Aldred, priest of Holy Island, English the other three Gospels. Thence, down to Wyclif's time, paraphrases were more popular than versions. Ælfric, Archbishop of York, A.D. 1000, instead of translating the Pentateuch, with Joshua and Judges, took the wiser course of summarising, in his own language, "what concerning the history of the Jews it is most important for Christian men to know." He wrote, in fact, a "Bible History."

Richard Rolle, of Hampole, A.D. 1349, turned the Psalms into English prose, and added a commentary, of which this is a sample. The words in Psalm ciii. 5, "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's," he renders: "Newed soul be als of acren thi youthed." The gloss being, "The arne (eagle) when he is growd with grete elde, his web waxis so greteley that he may nogt open his mouth and take mete; but then he smytes his web to the stane, and has away the slogh, and then he goes til mete, and he commes yong agayne."

This is much moderner than Ælfric's, in which Eve's reception by Adam is thus recorded: "Tha cwaedh (said) Adam: Heo is ban of minum banum and flaese of minnem flaesce. Beo hire name Virago, that is faemne."

England was too busy under her earlier Plantagenet Kings to care for doctrinal theology. She left that to Bohemians, and such like, while she was annexing Wales and Ireland, arranging a modus vivendi with Scotland, and keeping her hold on nearly half France. John of Gaunt was the first to cry out for an English Bible. "We will not be the dregs of all," he cried, when some churchman was questioning the good of Wyclif's work, "seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their tongue." Wyclif's prologue puts it on the same ground: "Frenchmen, Beemers (Bohemians), and Britons (Bretons), have the Bible translated in hire modir tongue. Whi shoulden not Englishmen have the same in hire modir language, I can not wite." The wonder is how rapidly Wyclif's book was multiplied. He and Nicholas of Hereford put forth their version in 1380. Eight years after Purvey published a revised edition. They say that over a hundred and seventy copies—of course manuscripts—have survived to this day. Purvey, "the symple creature," as he calls himself, aimed at simplicity. The Psalms in Wyclif's Bible—Hereford's work—are in grand, sonorous English. Thus Psalm ciii. 7 runs: "Knowen he made his weies unto Moises, and to the sones of Jacob his willis. . . . Aftir our synnes he did not to us. . . ." Purvey spoils this for modern ears by transposing: "He made his weies knowun to Moises; his willes to the sones of Israel. . . . He dide not to us aftir our synnes. . . ." Neither of them proposed to go further than the Vulgate. "Out of Latyn into English," says Purvey, "this symple creature hadde myche trauaile, with diverse gode felewis and kunnynge helperis, togedere manie elde biblis, and to make as Latyn bible sumdel trewe." Four times, he says, he went over it, consulting with grammarians and divines, and the last time shaping the sentences so as they should by simple men be understood. Men are in general most eager after what is forbidden them; and the clergy took the very way of making the Scriptures popular. Wyclif was more than ever persecuted, though he died in his living of Lutterworth; and not till forty years after his death was he dug up and burned, and his ashes thrown into the stream close by his churchyard. Hereford was excommunicated, and had to renounce Lollardism in order to get out of prison. Purvey, too, was frightened into recantation; and in 1414 a law was passed that all who read the Bible in English should forfeit "land, catel, lif, and goods, from ther heyres for ever." The anger of the clergy was not against the Bible, but against the Lollardism which was professed by its translators. Of course, if you deny the right of private judgement, it is no use giving a man a translated Bible; and, if he be free to judge, he is sure in many cases to run into what ecclesiastics call heresy. The true way would have been for the Church to have given an authorised version. Instead of this they found fault with Wyclif's. Sir T. More, though writing

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a hundred and fifty years later, gives the feeling of Wyclif's own time: "The great arch-heretic did purposely in his translation corrupt the holy text, maliciously planting therein such words as might, in the reader's ears, serve to proof of the heresies he went about to sow."

Wyclif's version, as compared with Purvey's, is notable for the abundant use — more Greek than English — of the participles. This Purvey specially disowns: "A participle may be resolved into a verb of the same tens, and a conjunction coperlatif;" and thus Wyclif's Acts xxi. 5, "And, the days fulfilled, we goinge forth wenten alle men ledinge forth us til to withoute the citee; and, the knees putt in in the see brynke, we preiden," becomes in Purvey: "And when the dayis weren filled, we zedin forth, and alle men ledden forth us withouten the citee, and we kneliden down in the sea brinke and preiden." And again of Balaam, Wyclif's Numbers, xxiv. 1: "And, the spirit of God fallynge into hym, takun to a parable, he seith," becomes, "And whanne the spirit of God felle on hym, whanne a parable was taken, he saide;" which last shows that Purvey went out of his way to substitute for terse English a clumsy roundabout, which he had got into his head was grammatically simpler.

Of course, both Wyclif and Purvey have old forms—been for bees, izen for eyes, etc. Here is a set of old verb-forms: "And the people that wenten before and that sueden (followed) crieden and saiden Osanna," etc. "Thilke gilour" (this deceiver), "the flum Jordan" (river), "therf" (unleavened), "cacchepollis" (sergeants), "sour dough" (leaven), "itchons" (hedgehogs, Psalm civ. 18), "soler" (upper room), "yrene" (spider), "unbileful" (incredible), are among the obsolete words. As is "doddied" (cut), of Absalom's hair—"the more that he doddied the haris, so much the more thei wexen;" "raskeyl" (rocaille, common people), "wonyng" (habitation), "stithie" (anvil), "sparlyous" (calves of legs), "sad" (stronger sure), "catel" (goods), "coffin" (basket). Sorcerers are "deuil-clepers," and "buffer" is a stammerer—"the tunge of bufferes swiftli shall speke." These are tersely put: "Whanne he nyzed (drew near to) the citie;" and, "Eche that enhauncith hym schal be lowed, and he that meketh hym (makes himself meek) shall be hizid" (exalted). "Soul-hauers" are living things. One remembers that old tract headed "The Ayenbite of Inwit" (the remorse of conscience); in Wyclif, "azen" (again) gives many such compounds; thus "azenstood" (resisted), "azenbier" (redeemer), "azenscie" (gainsay).

Though his translation was dubbed heretical, Wyclif does not weed out church terms, as did James the First's translators. He uses "the clergie" for "God's heritage" (1 Peter, v. 3), and priests where the Authorised Version has elders. Church in our version is limited to a Christian congregation; Wyclif uses it of any gathering; "the chirche of yuele (evil) men," and "it may be assilid in a lawful chirche" (Acts xix. 39). So, again, as he did not go beyond the Vulgate, he naturally uses "sacrament" where the Greek word is "mystery." "Great is the mystery of godliness," rather gains in clearness by being rendered, "It is gret sacrament of pitie" (piety). And—as if he held the Romanist view of marriage, of the man leaving father and mother, and cleaving to his wife—"this sacrament is gret." So John Baptist cries—just as he does in the Douay Bible—"Do ye penaunce;" and "repentance unto life" is "penaunce to leif." Some of his renderings are so terse, that one wonders why they were changed. "Passe we over the sea," is better, surely, than "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." "Brother Tite," and "Luk the leche," provoke a smile; but "the beloved Persis" is a poor exchange for "Persida moost deveouthe womman."

The Vulgate has of late gained credit. Scholars have found that Saint Jerome's manuscripts were much "better"—as they naturally would be—than those used by our translators. The Greek manuscripts which have in quite recent times been unearthed, in the Vatican, in Mount Athos monasteries, and other places, are found to agree in many parts with those which Jerome used. Hence, in several things, Wyclif's version, following the Vulgate, agrees with our "Revised," in omitting the doxology after the Lord's Prayer, for instance.

When Wyclif makes our Lord answer John Baptist's question, "And pore men taken to prechynge of the Gospel" (to the poor the Gospel is preached), one cannot help thinking that the translator was straining a point in support of his own plea of sending out poor men as preachers. Here are two more places in which Wyclif and the Revised agree. Job iii. 8: "rayse Leuyathan;" and Job xxxvii. 22: "Gold shall come fro the north," says Wyclif; "Golden splendour," say the Revisers;

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"Fair weather," being the Authorised rendering. Proverbs xix. 18: "Sette not thy soule to the sleyng of hym;" Revised, "His destruction;" where the Authorised has: "Let not thy soul spare for his crying."

And again, in Proverbs xi. 12, both Wyclif and the Revised invert the Authorised order, and give: "He that despiseth his friend is void of wisdom." Quaintness is sometimes delightful; for example: "Derlynges of God and clepid holy," Romans i. 7; but "biholde the crowis," for "consider the ravens," is trying to modern nerves; and so is "the perdicioner of her nappeth (slumbereth) not;" and "Pounce Pilat;" and "whist" for "hold thy peace;" and "be sly (wise) as serpents." Idols he generally renders "mawmets" (mammot is the modern form)—that is, Mahmouets, a strange survival from the Crusaders, when those who, of all men, are most fanatical for the unity of God were confounded with image worshippers. Wyclif's two editions, carried about by his itinerants, and studied by Lollards —"noisy babblers," the word means in Flemish—were all England had for nearly one hundred and fifty years.

Then Tyndale, a Gloucestershire man, trained first at Oxford and then at Cambridge, put forth his version, 1526. How bitter Tyndale was. He wrote: "The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar senfeth, and the pardoner pareth. We lack but a butcher to pull of the skin;" not foreseeing that for every penny the Church took or wheedled out of men's pockets, the "new men," who were waiting like vultures for the spoil of the monasteries, and egging on men like Tyndale to inflame the people against them, would take twelve at last. How Tyndale had to make his translation abroad; and how, to his everlasting shame — he has other things as shameful to answer for—Henry the Eighth had him dogged in the streets of Antwerp, by two English traitors, and handed over to the Emperor's officers to be hustled out of the city and burnt at Vilvoord, can be read in the histories.

Tyndale's version, less archaic than Wyclif's, has still plenty of quaint old words. "Gather up the gobbetes that remain." "Yer" (ere, before) is common. To rob is to "pill;" "gentle is "soft." Of course he was nothing if not controversial; and the use of "grace," where "favour" would so often be more natural, is due to him. "Church" he will have none of. He even renders, "Thou art Peter, and on this congregation will I build my church." "Confess" he wholly eschews; and yet for "the preparation" (Matthew xxvii. 62) he gives "Good Friday." There is a note of pathos in "that lost child" for Judas, instead of "the son of perdition." Servants are not to be "pickers"; and Christ, sitting among the doctors, "both heareth and poseth them." Many of his renderings are wanting in literalness—rather emphatic paraphrases than translations.

After Tyndale came Coverdale, 1535. His second edition is called the "Great Bible;" and within a year of it (1540) appeared Cranmer's Authorised Revision. All these are indiscriminately called "The Treacle Bible," because, instead of, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" they give "treacle," the "theriack" or Venice remedy against vipers' bites. They, and Matthew's, and Taverner's, and contemporary versions are also called "Bug Bible," because they give, "Thou shalt not be afraid of any bugges by night" (bugbears). He is much less Protestant than Tyndale, using "penance" several times for "repentance." Of his archaisms, one explains the title "Roundhead"—"Absalom rounded his head once a year." Coverdale's "Great Bible" was ordered to be set up in churches for every man to read. In Saint Paul's there were no less than six copies. An attempt was made early in Edward the Sixth's reign by Sir John Clarke to put the Bible into simple language, though not to give that ornate and telegraphese kind of version which the American revisers are said to have wished for. Centurions he called "hundreders," publicans "totters," proselytes "freshmen," crucified "crossed," and lunatic "mooned." Yet he could not resist the classicality of the age, and calls locusts "acrids," and spirits "phantasma." With the Geneva Bible, 1560, came in chapters and verses. It is wrongly called "The Breeches Bible," for Wyclif long before had given "breechis" for the aprons of fig-leaves. The Bishop's Bible, 1568, is full of "padding" and mouth-filling words. Its notes—for all these older versions have notes—are far less racy than those of its predecessors, though it does assert that "the Pope is the successor not of Simon Peter, but of Simon Magus." It could not, for instance, return the Geneva note, Revelations ix. 3, "These locusts out of the bottomless pit are worldly Prelates, with Archbishops, Bishops, etc."

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The Douay Bible, 1609, was professedly hard on the Vulgate, and often retained "the old vulgar approved Latin for fear of undoing or restraining the sense of the Holy Ghost to our phantasy." Hence we read, "Elias was a man like unto us passible," "Give us to-day our supersubstantial bread;" "loaves of proposition" (shew-bread). And so we come to the Authorised Version of 1611, which, save that the Psalms for the month are from Cranmer's Bible, has superseded older translations even in the Prayer Book. Till quite lately, however, no two editions were wholly identical. In some the misprints were startling. There is the well-known edition of 1631, in which the "not" was left out from one of the Commandments, an omission for which the printer was fined three hundred pounds. Others have "vinegar" for vineyard; "covereth" for converteth a sinner; while, till the revision, the words "strain at a gnat," instead of Tyndale's "strain out," made a difficulty where none exists.

Bible-printing was a monopoly. In Scotland, from 1676, for more than forty years it was enjoyed by Mrs. Anderson, whose books are the most incorrect that ever came from any press. Look at Dobson's "Bassandyne Bible," and you will see how long-suffering a Scot must have been who could read a chapter of the muddle that Mrs. Anderson made of Holy Writ. "Why should it be, though tathing incredible?"—when a book is printed that way, one feels sure that, to save the bawbees, the good lady must have employed children to set up her type. The next Scotch monopolist, Sir David Hunter Blair, was a vast improvement; but he makes one notable error: in Luke xi. 29 he omits the "not"—"forbid to take thy coat also."

It must not be supposed that a happy rendering—and our Bible has so many—came all at once. It is generally—as Dr. Edgar, in his "Plain Account for Plain People," expresses it—"the result of long whittling." Thus, Tyndale's "maintainer" at last becomes "ringleader;" and his "behold a right Israelite," "an Israelite indeed." The Authorised Version had scarcely appeared when it was bitterly attacked on the principle on which Clarke had attacked the "Great Bible." Even Selden complained of its un-English phrases, not to be understood by common folk. If the Long Parliament had been yet longer it would have been revised.

Dr. Doddridge's attempt was not a happy one. "Superior authorities, for "higher powers;" "partook of their refreshment," for "did eat their meat;" "pure and unmingled," for "pure milk of the word."

The Scot, M'Knight, in 1798, erred in the opposite direction. For "corrupt communication" he puts "rotten speech;" for "cleave unto his wife," "he shall be glued unto."

Another Scot, Thomson of Ochiltree, essayed a version in 1816. For "let Paul down in a basket," he gives "suspended;" for "faith is the substance of things hoped for," etc., he gives, "a realising of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." "Holy ornature" seems a poor exchange for "sanctuary," in Hebrews ix. 1; but some people like these things. It is as good as Bloomfield's "sacred furniture."

Scotland has produced several translators, who, like Clerke, wished to harmonise the Bible language with that of daily life. The result is quaint. Saint Matthew, published by way of experiment in 1862, is made of stuff like this: "Ai' there was a guid way aff frae them a hirsel o' mony swine feeding." And what can we think of Dr. Waddell's Psalms, published ten years later: "My God, I hae akreight the lee lang day, but ye mind me nane;" and "Droves o' nowt hae rinket me roun; stoor stirks o' Bashan hae fankit me aboot."

And so we come to the Revisers, who have at least the merit of standing firmly against the American modernisations. To have altered Jacob's "ladder" into a "staircase," would have been as bad as to change the man and woman of the wedding service into "male person" and "female."

CURIOS OF DUELLING.

The advantages of living in the latter half of the nineteenth century are many and various; but none is more to be prized than the fact that the face of society is now as sternly set against duelling as it looked with favour upon the barbarous custom in days which are within the memory of many living men. We can hardly realise now, that fifty years ago a Major in the British Army was killed in a duel which arose in a simple dispute about what was trumps at a game of cards; but such was the case.

Men have lost their lives in duels about

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dogs, geese, or such an absurdly trivial cause as a bottle of anchovies. Duels have originated in one man asking another to pass him a glass at dinner, or to give him a pinch of snuff. It is even recorded that a British officer maimed a lieutenant in the American army for life, in a duel which was the result of a dispute as to the proper way in which to eat an ear of corn.

There is no record of a private duel having been fought in this country before the time of James the First. Duels became usual in the reign of that monarch, and grew in favour during the years in which the two Charles occupied the throne. They were most common in England in the dissolute days of Charles the Second. It was then customary for seconds to fight as well as their principals, and, as they were always chosen for their adroitness, their combats were usually the more fatal.

Duels were prevalent in France for fully a century before they became introduced on this side of the Channel. Hallam attributes their rise to the barbarous custom of wearing a sword as part of the private dress of a gentleman of fashion, which was introduced at the end of the fifteenth century. The height that this vice attained in France is shown by the statement of Fortenoy Mareuil, who says, in his "Mémoires," that two thousand men of noble birth fell in duels between 1601 and 1619.

Edicts against duels were published; but with little effect. Men fought in the public streets and in private rooms; by day and night; by moonlight and torchlight; and it was not until Richelieu made a terrible example of the Count de Bouteville—a noted duellist, who had been in twenty-two encounters—that anything was done to stop them. Bouteville and his second, the Count de Chappelles, were beheaded, in spite of the efforts of their noble friends; and their fate acted as a deterrent on would-be duellists for some years.

After the effect of this salutary example had worn off a little, and duels began again to become fashionable, a further check was imposed upon them by two combatants being, at the Cardinal's orders, stripped and hung from a gallows head downwards, in the sight of all people.

On Richelieu's death the habit broke out again with renewed violence, and continued to be more or less prevalent until the Revolution put a stop to it for a time.

A list of duels fought in France during the last sixty years, includes the names of such well-known men as Emile de Girardin, Armand Carrel, Lamartine, Alexandre Dumas, Ledru Rollin, Edmond About, Sainte-Beuve, and Monsieur Thiers; while the recent meeting between General Boulanger and Monsieur Floquet shows that Frenchmen of every class still regard the duel as the legitimate way in which to settle disputes. The best feature of this survival of the manners of a barbarous age is, that though during the last twenty years there have been nearly a thousand duels in France, in ninety-eight per cent. of the cases the combatants left the field unscathed, though the demands of honour were declared to be satisfied. So it seems that Mark Twain's delightful parody of a French duel has a good deal of truth in it.

One of the most extraordinary duels ever fought took place in 1808 between two Frenchmen. Of course the quarrel rose about a lady—a certain Mademoiselle Tirevet—who, it appears, was unable to decide which of the two she preferred, and who found a way out of the difficulty by promising to marry whichever of them worsted the other. The ardent lovers agreed to postpone the matter for a month that they might have time to think it over in a calm and judicial spirit; and, at the end of that time, decided to fight in the air. Two balloons were made exactly alike; and, upon the appointed day, each soared aloft, accompanied by his second, and armed with a blunderbuss; the agreement being that they were to fire not upon one another, but upon the balloons. They rose half a mile, and then the preconcerted signal was given. One of the opponents fired and missed; the other followed suit with more disastrous effect. He hit his opponent's balloon, which instantly collapsed, with the result that the occupants of the car were dashed to the earth with frightful rapidity and killed on the spot.

A duel, which occasioned a great sensation at the time of its occurrence was one between Henri Delagrave and Alphonse Rivière; the cause being the success of the former in wooing a young lady to whom they were both attached. Rivière insulted his successful rival by slapping him on the cheek in a gaming-saloon, and it was agreed that a duel should take place in which the life of one should be ended. The details were left to their seconds to arrange; and, until they faced one another upon the field, neither of the young men

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knew in what form they were to brave death. On the following morning four men met in a quiet wood. They were Rivière, with Monsieur Savalle, his second, and Delagrave, who was accompanied by a doctor named Rocquet. The latter informed the rivals that Monsieur Savalle and himself had arrived at the decision that, in order to secure the certainty of a fatal result to one of their principals, it would be best to leave out of the question swords or pistols, and to trust to the more sure action of a deadly poison. As he spoke he drew from his pocket a little box, in which lay four black pellets all exactly identical in size and shape.

"In one of these," he said, "I have placed a sufficient quantity of prussic acid to cause the almost instantaneous death of any one who swallows it. Monsieur Savalle and I will decide by the toss of a coin which of you is to have first choice, and you shall alternately draw and swallow a pill until the poison shows its effects."

While speaking the last words, the doctor spun into the air a glittering gold piece, and, as it fell, Savalle cried "Tails." It fell with the head uppermost, and Savalle said:

"The first choice is yours, Monsieur Delagrave."

The two whose fate was contained in those innocent-looking black balls had shown no sign of trepidation while the doctor explained the awful preparations that he had made for the death of one of them; and Delagrave's face was perfectly impassive as he selected and washed down with a glass of claret one of the globules.

"And now Monsieur Rivière," said the doctor.

Rivière extended his hand and took a pill, which he swallowed with as little appearance of concern as his opponent. A minute passed, two, three, and still the duellists stood motionless.

"It is your choice again, Monsieur Delagrave," said the doctor; "but this time you must swallow the pill at the same instant that Monsieur Rivière swallows the one you leave for him."

Delagrave paused for a moment, looking in silence at the two balls that lay before him. The closest scrutiny showed not the slightest difference between them; one was harmless, but in the other rested the pall of eternity—the silence and peace of that sleep which knows no awakening in this world. With a start, he drew his eyes from the box, and, putting his finger and thumb into it, drew forth one of the remaining pills. Rivière took the solitary one remaining, and both men simultaneously gulped down their fate. A few seconds passed without any perceptible movement on the part of either of them, and then Rivière threw up his hands, and, without a sound, fell flat upon the grass. He turned half round, gave one convulsive shudder, and, as his rival bent over him, breathed his last. The fair cause of this awful tragedy was so horrified at it, that she refused to see Delagrave again; and the memory of those few minutes weighed so heavily upon him, that he followed Rivière to the grave in a few months' time.

Of a similar nature was a duel which took place between a young Englishman and a noted French duellist—a man who had killed several adversaries, and was considered the most deadly shot of his day. Every morning he devoted a couple of hours to shooting at small plaster-of-Paris figures, and such was his skill, that he was able to make almost a certainty of hitting them at a distance of fifty paces. The Englishman expressed his entire willingness to meet this formidable adversary, but not on the usual terms. "I have no fancy," he said, "for placing myself before the pistol of a man whose aim is as sure as mine is erratic; and the only conditions on which I will consent to the meeting, are that we choose between two pistols, one only of which is loaded, and, standing within two paces of one another, fire simultaneously."

The Frenchman consented with perfect coolness to this proposal, and the meeting took place on these terms. Two pistols were brought out, and the seconds of the combatants tossed up for choice of weapons. The selection fell to the Frenchman—Villeneuve. He balanced the weapons separately in his hands, endeavouring to discriminate between the weight of the one which contained the bullet, and the one which was charged with powder only. He fixed upon the one he thought was the heavier, and the other was given to Talbot, his antagonist. They took up their positions so close to one another, that the muzzle of each man's pistol touched his adversary. The seconds advanced. Talbot wrung the hand of his friend with a faint smile, while Villeneuve nodded carelessly to those among the bystanders whom he knew. The word was given, and the two

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pistols went off at the same instant. Both men fell. Talbot rose almost immediately, but Villeneuve lay still, having met the fate of most professed duellists. Talbot's face was scorched by the explosion of the gunpowder; but he escaped the death that would undoubtedly have been his, had the meeting taken place in an ordinary way.

Several remarkable duels have been fought in the dark. In 1800, Isaac Corry and Henry Grattan engaged in a fierce debate, which culminated in Corry saying that Grattan, instead of addressing him, should, if he had his deserts, be standing at a felon's bar.

Grattan's reply to this insult concluded with the following words: "The gentleman has calumniated me to-night in Parliament; he will calumniate me to-morrow in the King's courts. But had he said, or dared to have insinuated one half as much elsewhere, the indignant spirit of an honest man would have answered this vile and venal slander with a blow."

The two left the House immediately, with friends, and, although it was pitch dark, a meeting was arranged there and then, and at the first shot Corry's left arm was shattered.

As recently as 1853, Lieutenant Sheppard, stationed at Bombay, offended Captain Phillips, of his own regiment. A violent dispute arose, which ended in their exchanging shots by the light of a candle, held by a servant of one of them. Captain Phillips fell mortally wounded. His opponent was tried by court-martial, dismissed the army, and afterwards found guilty of manslaughter by a civil court.

One night, at Cassala, Signor Rossi was playing Hamlet, and was interrupted, time after time, by the loud talking and laughing of a body of young Italians. Finally, he stopped in the middle of a speech, and, walking to the foot-lights, said: "I will continue when you will allow me." The chattering stopped, and he was able to proceed with his part; but, at the conclusion of the play, the box-keeper handed him a challenge from one of the young men to whom he had spoken. The actor did not wish to appear afraid; but it was absolutely imperative that he should leave Cassala early the next morning, as he had to give a performance at Milan. He went to the address of the challenger and explained matters to him, adding: "If you will dispense with the formality of seconds, and will accompany me to my hotel, I have a big room in which we can settle our little difference in time for me to get away to Milan, if you allow me."

The proposal was agreed to, and they repaired at once to Rossi's hotel. But they were not allowed to fight their duel in peace, for the landlord came to the door and begged to be allowed to enter. He had heard of the challenge, and seeing Rossi return with a stranger, his suspicions were aroused. It was all in vain that Rossi told him his visitor had gone. Nothing would satisfy him unless he could see the light extinguished.

"We must humour him," whispered Rossi. "It will be easy to take aim by the sparks of our cigarettes."

So the light was put out, and the landlord went away, only, however, to hear in a few minutes two loud reports, and to find his fears confirmed on rushing back again. Rossi stood uninjured; and his antagonist lay with a shattered shoulder-blade.

Lord Byron, uncle of the poet, killed a Mr. Chatworth in a duel which was fought practically in the dark in 1765. There was some suspicion of foul play, and Lord Byron was tried for manslaughter before his peers, but was dismissed on payment of the fees.

The nephew of this man, Lord Byron, the poet, was much galled by severe strictures passed by Southey upon his character and writings, and announced his intentions of demanding "the satisfaction due to a gentleman." For some reason the challenge was never sent; but in anticipation of it the Laureate prepared the following reply, which was found among his papers:

"Sir,—I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and do myself the pleasure of replying to it without delay. In affairs of this kind the partners ought to meet upon equal terms. But to establish the equality between you and me, there are three things which ought to be done, and then a fourth also becomes necessary before I can meet you on the field:

"First.—You must marry and have four children. Please be particular in having them all girls.

"Secondly.—You must prove that the greater part of the provision which you make for them depends upon your life; and you must be under a bond of four thousand pounds not to be hanged, not to

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commit suicide, and not to be killed in a duel — which are the conditions upon which I have effected an insurance of my own life for the benefit of my wife and daughters.

"Thirdly.—I must tell three direct falsehoods concerning you upon the hustings, or in some other not less public assembly; and I shall neither be able to do this, nor to meet you afterwards in the manner you propose, unless you can perform the fourth thing, which is, that you must convert me from the Christian religion.

"Till all this be accomplished, our dispute must be carried on without the use of any more iron than is necessary for blackening our ink and mending our pens; or any more lead than enters into the composition of the 'Edinburgh Review.'

"I have the honour to subscribe myself, sir, yours, with all proper consideration,

"Robert Southey."

In the last century Europe nearly beheld the edifying spectacle of a duel between two of the most powerful monarchs of the day. A quarrel arose between George the Third of England and Frederick of Prussia about negotiations for a double marriage which it was proposed should take place between their houses. The angry feeling engendered was increased by a quarrel about Mecklenburg, and after a violently abusive and very unbecoming correspondence, the two monarchs came to the resolution of settling their differences by a personal meeting. King George chose Brigadier-General Sulton as his second, and Frederick selected Colonel Dersheim to accompany him. The territory of Hildesheim was fixed upon for the place of meeting, the King of England being at this time at Hanover, while the Prussian monarch was at Saltzdahl, near Brunswick. The meeting was averted by the Prussian Minister to the Court of St. James, who, having been dismissed thence, in a very abrupt manner, repaired to his Royal master.

At first he feigned to encourage him in his purpose, but he managed to persuade Frederick to delay the sending of the challenge for a fortnight by pointing out to him that his health was far from good just then, and that a collapse just before the meeting would place him in a very false position.

The delay enabled the ministers on both sides to negotiate, with the result that the quarrel was made up.

Duelling received its death-blow in England by a fatal encounter which took place on the first of July, 1843.

Two officers, Colonel Fawcett and Lieutenant Munro, who were brothers-in-law, had a quarrel. Colonel Fawcett was elderly; had been in India; was out of health; and exceedingly irritable in temper. It came out afterwards that he had given his relation the greatest provocation. Still, Lieutenant Munro hung back from what, up to that time, had been regarded as the sole resource of a gentleman, especially a military man.

He showed great reluctance to challenge Colonel Fawcett; and it was only after the impression—mistaken or otherwise—was given to the insulted man, that his regiment expected him to take the old course, and that if he did not do so he must be disgraced throughout the Service, that he called out his brother-in-law. The challenge was accepted; the meeting took place; Colonel Fawcett was shot dead; and the horrible anomaly presented itself of two sisters—the one rendered a widow by the hand of her brother-in-law; and a family of children clad in mourning for their uncle, whom their father had slain. Apart from the bloodshed, Lieutenant Munro was ruined by the miserable step on which he had been thrust.

Public feeling was roused to protest against the barbarous practice, by which a bully had it in his power to risk the life of a man immeasurably his superior, against whom he happened to have a dislike. Prince Albert interested himself deeply in the question, especially as it concerned the army.

Various expedients were suggested; eventually an amendment was inserted into the Articles of War, which was founded on the more reasonable, humane, and Christian conclusion that to offer an apology, or even to make reparation when wrong had been committed, was more becoming the character of an officer and gentleman, than to furnish the alternative of standing up to kill or to be killed for a hasty word or a rash act.

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

By ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER V.

The longer I remained at Woodburn Hall, the more I became convinced of the fact that Mrs. Wild was but a mere puppet,

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and that her husband pulled the wires. I also discovered that, previous to her marriage with him, he had been a music-master in rather poor circumstances, so that whatever money there was belonged to her; and thus, one of my earliest surmises was proved correct. It was remarkable what a mere look from him could accomplish! I have spoken before of the influence his playing had upon his wife. Well, it was not very long before I began to experience some of its effects myself. It was one evening at dusk that, as I sat by the window of the school-room, gazing out at the dreary prospect of trees shut in by a high wall, there came floating through the house the wonderful strains of "The Moonlight Sonata." It was nearly dark, and as I listened idly to the melodious sounds they seemed gradually to hover round me, and draw me irresistibly towards their source. It might have been only the spell of the music, falling upon me just at the mysterious hour of twilight, that drew me there; but five minutes later I was sitting on the step outside the drawing-room door, with my ear near the keyhole, drinking in the witching sounds produced by the conjunction of a stout, sandy-haired man, and an Erard grand piano. Martha Horrocks happened to pass me as I sat there, and threw up her hands in what seemed almost more like horror than surprise at my situation. "Lord preserve us!" I heard her mutter to herself, "she's took the same way!" What could she mean, the foolish woman, by that remark? Suddenly the music stopped in the middle of a bar, and, before I could change my position, the door opened, and Mr. Wild appeared on the threshold. I started up in great confusion, and apologised incoherently for the way in which I had ventured to gratify my artistic senses; in fact, I declared by way of explanation, that I had been drawn there, whether I would or not.

There was a light in the room behind him, and as he stood in the doorway I saw a slow, sinister smile steal round the corners of his mouth, and spread from there to his eyes, which glittered under his half-closed lids with a look of intense, malicious gratification. So, at least, I described it to myself; but then I was prejudiced against him. And as I returned to my quarters in the school-room, I resolved that the next time I felt tempted to act in a similar way, I would stuff my fingers into my ears, rather than yield to the temptation, and pamper the vanity of a man for whom, for various indescribable reasons, I entertained a hearty dislike.

And I kept this my resolve, and whenever I heard the sounds which exercised such a potent fascination over me echoing through the house at dusk, I either tied a shawl over my head to deaden the sound, or, if the weather permitted, put on my hat and fled into the garden. Sometimes I fancied that I heard the drawing-room door open and shut softly. Was it to see if there was a spell-bound listener crouched outside it? And, if so, was he disappointed to find there was none? I fancy so; and also about this time, I more than once, when sitting in the school-room, either engaged in teaching my refractory pupil the elements of knowledge, or employed in some occupation of my own, felt a strange sensation, almost amounting to a shudder, combined with a dislike to look behind me; and when I conquered the feeling, and cast a hasty glance round, I caught a glimpse of a tall stout figure, clad in light grey clothes, just turning away from the window, or the half-opened door. Altogether, what with these strange fancies, and the air of mystery that hung over this depressing house, I was becoming nervous to a degree, and inclined to see significance in the merest trifles; to start when Florence's slate-pencil squeaked upon the slate, and turn pale when the wind howled round the house like a banshee, bewailing the evil to come. This present situation of mine was certainly proving by far the most interesting of any I had ever held; but the interest was of the uncanny, creepy description, which made me pull the clothes over my head when I woke at night, with the fear lest I should hear something—what, I didn't know; but the feeling grew upon me, and towards the latter part of my residence at Woodburn Hall, I had a premonition that there was a climax of some sort approaching. Certainly there was something so very strange in the demeanour of Mrs. Wild at times, as almost to denote insanity; though, at present, in a mild form. Was this the key to the puzzle, and the reason why we lived in a large house, with only one servant to wait upon us, and why no visitor ever entered the doors? Did that account for the look of half disgust and half—something else which I saw in Mr. Wild's eyes when they rested on his wife's pale face and shrinking form, as she sat opposite to him? For on Sundays, when

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they dined early, my pupil and I partook of the meal with them; a privilege I would rather have been spared, as Mrs. Wild had a nervous way of playing with the knives, while her husband watched her incessantly, like a cat does a mouse, under his half-closed eye-lids, in a manner that used so to affect my nerves that sometimes I felt as though I must scream aloud; and it was an intense relief when Florence upset the contents of her plate or deluged herself with gravy by way of interlude. We were waited on, while at table, by the angular handmaid who combined so many and various offices in her one spare person. I often used to find her staring at me absently, when she ought to have been handing the vegetables; and several times, when I passed her on the stairs, or about the house, she seemed to me to be on the point of telling me something. She would look at me curiously, open her mouth, then apparently change her mind, or think better of it, and pass on.

Two or three Sundays elapsed before I again took my pupil to church — the weather was bad, or something, and I compromised matters by telling her Bible stories at home. Daniel in the den of lions was a favourite, in consequence of her having once seen a circus; and Daniel, in her mind, was always pictured cracking a whip and wearing tight trousers with a gilt stripe down each leg. I attempted to combat this idea in vain; and also another, which was, that the Children of Israel travelled in caravans and sold mops and brooms.

However, on this, our second appearance at the church in the village—warned by my previous experience—I insisted, before starting, on a thorough investigation of my charge's pockets, with the intention of confiscating all contraband and unseemly articles. I was rewarded by the discovery of three cigar stumps, a broken boot-lace, and the handle of the school-room door. Consequently, the service passed pretty smoothly and without any particular difficulty, until within about ten minutes of its conclusion. The clergyman had got well on with his "lastly," and I was inwardly congratulating myself that, not for another week, at least, should I be required to pass a similarly anxious period, and, at the same time, admiring the classic profile of "old Dr. Green's assistant," who also happened to be attending church again that morning, when there was a crash, and Florence fell right off her seat, bounded against the door of the pew, burst it open, and rolled out into the aisle—all in the space of a couple of seconds. I precipitated myself after her.

"Are you hurt? You bad girl! Don't cry!" I uttered frantically, at the same time endeavouring to lift her up and carry her into the porch before the tremendous howl which I saw coming had time to culminate.

Just then, I heard a gentleman's voice saying, "Allow me," and, almost before I could look round, Dr. Green's assistant had picked her up and borne her kicking and struggling into the vestibule, where he stifled her cries by the prompt administration of an acid-drop. Having ascertained that there were no bones broken and no damage done, beyond an incipient bump on her forehead and a possible black eye to follow, he volunteered to carry her home, which offer the patient received with acclamations, and, as it was no great distance, I was forced to accede to it.

We parted at the gate of the Hall, he promising to send up a lotion to be applied to the injured parts, and I acknowledging in my own heart that "a man was a man for a' that," though in the eyes of the world he might be only "old Dr. Green's assistant."

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE and dreadful thing happened that same evening. I had seen Florence—whose head had pained her considerably—put to bed, and had responded to the fretful demand for a fairy-tale before she went to sleep; compounding with my conscience by giving a highly-coloured and sensational account of the adventures of Joseph and his brethren, which Joseph himself would scarcely have recognised.

It was generally understood that I passed Sunday evening in the drawing-room, either with a book or exchanging polite commonplaces with my employers. Occasionally we had some music, to which I felt I could listen demurely, behind the shelter of my magazine, without infringing on my firm resolution not to yield myself again to its magnetic influence, and, in the well-lighted room, with the curtains drawn and the fire blazing on the hearth—for we were still only in November—the strains lost most of the attraction which they had possessed for me, when I heard them as I sat in the twilight in the lonely school-room. But this evening I felt unac-

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countably sleepy, and the music had upon me almost the effect of a soporific.

I lazily turned over in my own mind the events of the day, and a smile relaxed the corners of my mouth as I recalled the accident of the morning, and the prompt and welcome assistance which had been afforded by "Dr. Green's assistant," who, it appeared, had attended the child before, when suffering from an attack of the measles, and was, consequently, in some degree acquainted with the strange household. I wonder what he thought of it? I should like to have his opinion on Mrs. Wild. I wonder——

The melting strains of one of Mendelssohn's "Lieder" seemed to come sweetly and faintly as from a distance. My head fell back, and—— What was it that suddenly recalled me from a condition of semi-oblivion to one of alertness and anticipation? Was anything happening or about to happen? The music had stopped, and the musician was sitting motionless before the instrument, with his hands still resting on the keys. He was gazing steadfastly at his wife, who had risen from her seat and was standing on the hearth-rug in front of the fire. She had on a dress of black silk, draped with grenadine or some other thin, gauzy material, and in one hand she held a strip of folded paper. I saw his eyes—which were nearly always hidden beneath their lids—open to their widest extent and fix themselves upon her as she stood there, seemingly fascinated under his gaze.

At the same time I felt conscious of a certain vague and awful power in those sinister orbs, and a dread lest they should be turned on me; but my presence seemed to be either forgotten or unheeded by both. Then I saw her give a slight convulsive shiver, while, with her right hand, she inserted the strip of paper between the bars of the grate, where it caught fire.

What was she going to do? Good heavens! The lighted paper was brought near to those gauzy draperies—nearer still. In another second they were in a blaze! I gave a loud cry as I saw the tongue of flame shoot up, and throwing off my lethargy, sprang forward. At the same moment Mr. Wild relaxed his fixed stare, and, catching up a fur rug which lay in front of the piano, in a second had thrown it round his wife, pressing it down with his hands, while I, taking the cue from him, heaped upon her every available piece of drapery or loose article that lay at hand, and the fire, thus promptly attacked, was soon subdued.

"Were you mad, Laura?" he whispered, hoarsely, to the woman, who had made not the slightest effort to save herself from a horrible death, but stood motionless, as though carved out of stone, through the bustle and confusion which ensued. "What possessed you to——"

She gave him a look—a look of mingled horror and contempt, and the words died away on his lips. As for me, I was in a condition of fright and bewilderment beyond all power of words to describe. What was the meaning of that extraordinary scene I had just witnessed, and why had the man passively allowed his wife to set light to her own garments, and put her life in jeopardy, without stirring hand or foot, or uttering a word to prevent the catastrophe? For it was not until he heard my shriek that—— My head was going round and round, and I felt more like fainting than I had ever done before in my life—only just then I caught sight of a terrible burn on her arm above the wrist, which I knew must be causing her agony, though apparently she felt nothing, and still preserved her stony calm.

"Oh!" I cried. "Won't some one go for the doctor? Look here at this dreadful burn!"

He cast his eyes in the direction of the injury, with a look of what was curiously like disappointment, as though—but surely I must be out of my mind, as well as the unhappy woman who stood there, staring vacantly before her.

"I will send Martha here," after a few seconds' pause, during which he seemed to be thinking deeply, "and go for him myself." And he left the room.

"Oh, Mrs. Wild!" I cried, hysterically, as the door closed on him. "How could you do such a thing? How could you be so mad?"

The word seemed to strike upon her ear and disturb the torpor which had taken possession of her.

"Mad!" she repeated after me. "That is what they all think. That is what he wants them to think!" Then, turning to me: "Do you think I'm mad, too?"

What could I say but "No, no!" and beg her to be calm until the doctor came to dress her arm? But she would not, and, touching the charred remnants of her dress, asked almost fiercely:

"Do you think I did this of my own will? Don't you know he hates me, and——"

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What other terrible revelation she might have made I do not know, for just then Martha Horrocks entered the room, to whom I thought it incumbent upon me to explain that her mistress had met with an accident. An accident! What else could I call it? She received my explanation grimly.

"An accident!" she remarked, looking from one to the other. "How many more of 'em, I wonder? And why do they always happen when he's by?" There was an emphasis upon the pronoun, which implied no little suspicion of the individual thus referred to. "There was that bottle o' laudanum she took by mistake not more'n three months ago—through being left handy a' purpose on the mantelshelf—and now here's another!"

I ventured to mention, by way of propitiation, that Mr. Wild had gone for the doctor; but the only reply she vouchsafed was a snort of mingled contempt and defiance; then, seizing upon her mistress, who had uttered no word during our colloquy, nor seemed to heed what was passing round her, she bore her off to await his arrival, and he again proved to be no other than "Dr. Green's assistant."

For two or three days she was confined to her room, and tended by her faithful, but unprepossessing abigail, whose plain-spoken suspicions, added to my own unspeakable thoughts, were almost more than I could endure.

What was the mystery, the dark and terrible mystery which hung like a pall over Woodburn Hall and its inmates? Was the lady mad, and, if so, how was it that her husband imposed no restraint upon her actions, but deliberately allowed her to imperil her own life? And what did Martha mean by that reference to the bottle of laudanum?

It was after his third visit that I met Dr. Howard—by which name I now knew him—leaving the sick-room. He stopped, and shook hands, and enquired after Florence, who, in consequence of her own black eye—of which she was inordinately proud — and my own unsettled state of mind, was leading a life of freedom from study, and indulging in every kind of lawlessness possible. I had that morning been compelled to read the Riot Act in consequence of her flagrant disregard of the feelings of the family cat, manifested by affixing a clothes-peg to his tail in such a manner as to cause the enraged and insulted animal to run amuck among the china, and demolish an entire row of flower-pots in the conservatory in his endeavours to rid himself of the appendage.

But to return to the Doctor, who gave me a favourable account of his patient, but, at the same time, remarked that I looked far from well myself.

I confessed that what had happened had upset me considerably; that I could neither sleep by night nor rest by day; that my appetite was gone; and the least thing sent me into a paroxysm of nervous terror.

He looked grave, as I continued, and said he would send me a tonic and a sleeping draught, if I was unable to procure sleep by natural means, and again remarked that there was no need for any further anxiety on behalf of Mrs. Wild, as she was doing well and might come downstairs to-morrow if she chose. At the same time, he added that he could not quite comprehend how the accident had occurred. Could I enlighten him?

I told him what I had seen—how the unhappy lady had applied the light to her own garments, and how—sinking my voice to a whisper, and looking nervously round me—her husband had most unaccountably refrained from interfering until her dress was in a blaze.

He looked graver and graver as I continued; but only said that perhaps I was mistaken. At least he hoped so.

Then I also asked him in my turn what Martha Horrocks had meant by the allusion to the bottle of laudanum, and he told me that some months ago Mrs. Wild had taken by mistake a large dose of laudanum, which had been supplied to her husband for some medicinal purpose, and, unfortunately, left standing about. Luckily, he added, the dose had not been sufficient to prove fatal, though the consequences might have been serious had not remedies been administered promptly.

There was a sudden draught of cold air from an open window, or something, which made me shudder at these words, and at the same time the Doctor, dropping my hand—which he had been holding professionally—and addressing some one behind me, said:

"I am happy to find my patient much improved to-day."

And, turning round, I saw the now-familiar, stout, commonplace figure of the man I was beginning to fear as well as hate.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 43.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX. SECOND SIGHT.

EVERY one has noticed that if some event which appears to us personally of importance takes place, it is very often followed by another. We can look back at certain years that seemed crowded by these so-called "turning-points;" we can trace the net-work for a little space, till, feeling giddy, as if we watched too closely a very varied landscape from a high tower, we are glad to give up the scrutiny, and go down to a lower level. But even as these events are taking place, we are conscious that they do not come singly, and that the proverb, "Misfortunes never come alone," has a strange truth in it, so that one wonders if the events of our lives have cycles like comets and meteoric showers.

Mr. Kestell's interview with Elva, full as it was of strange happiness for him, was not one of unmixed joy. He was more disturbed than he cared to own about young Akister. He must, of course, keep Elva's secret; and he hoped neither the young man nor his father would speak to him on the subject, for, of course, his "little girl" must please herself. But it was unfortunate, very. To look at Walter Akister, one could not fancy him in love. Elva was right. But, apart from the man himself, his position was all that could be desired. Was his wife right, and ought his girls to have more advantages? All these thoughts passed through his brain that evening when he went as usual out of the front door to the bridge, where he could see the placid waters of the Pool. Summer or winter, wet or fine, Mr. Kestell always walked out to the bridge after wishing his wife good-night. Sometimes he only stayed a minute; sometimes, if the evening were fine, or the moon shining, he would stop a little while.

The autumn evening was perfect; the moon bright and soft; a little thin cloud was stretching right across her face like a man's hand trying to hide her beauty. The Pool was placid and still; only now and then a water-rat splashed in from the bank, or a moor-hen was disturbed.

Mr. Kestell was not thinking of beauty as he stood there. For beauty to affect us we must have a heart free from care, and bring our offering of a calm spirit to her shrine.

Suddenly he turned, and then, close beside him, stood Amice. Mr. Kestell was startled for half a second. He had not heard her coming. And then he was angry with her for startling him; and yet he would not have owned to either feeling for the world.

"You, Amice? Won't you catch cold?"

As well as frightening her father, however, it seemed that Amice was herself nervous. The hand that held her white shawl trembled.

"Elva is playing, papa; so I thought I would tell you before I forgot——"

Yes, across the narrow strip of lawn at the side of the house came the sounds of a piano, full-toned and well-played. But to-night the strains were melancholy.

"Forgot what, Amice?"

Mr. Kestell did not alter his tone, which was gentle and kind. Still Amice hesitated. She hardly knew herself; only

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she was afraid of her father, and he could not bear to see this fear. How different from Elva's love and confidence!

"I forgot to mention that Symee told me that her brother's holiday was to begin to-morrow. I went down to the farm to-day, and asked Mrs. Deeprose to get his room ready as usual."

"Oh yes, of course, of course. Still, my dear, you might have mentioned it earlier in the day; I would have gone down myself to see that everything was ready."

Mr. Kestell was returning hastily to the house, and Amice was by his side. She had on her simple evening dress of white serge, and was not given to being fashionable, having, as Miss Heaton put it, "much too flowing ideas about dress for a girl who went to church."

Mr. Kestell was not a man who understood fashion in female attire; but he knew that Elva always looked well-dressed, and, like other people, only nicer, whilst Amice was always strangely attired, he knew not in what.

"Jesse Vicary is easily satisfied; besides, he feels quite at home at the farm. What I wanted to add, papa, if you will not mind—might we not let Symee go there, too, for a few days? Mrs. Deeprose can put her up; and for a little while she would be happy with her brother all alone."

"But, my dear Amice, your mother—what will she say?"

"I can take Symee's place—I am sure I can; mamma is accustomed to my doing things for her."

"Not at all suitable. And, indeed, I don't know——"

They entered the drawing-room, where Elva was playing; but she jumped up as she saw them coming in.

"Papa, isn't it good of Amice? I told her to go and ask you. You must agree; think of the pleasure they will have. I'm sure, if Amice and I were separated nearly all the year, we should want to be quite—quite alone for a long, long time."

"Settle it among yourselves," said Mr. Kestell, quietly; "but I insist on your mother's wishes being first consulted. Now sing something, one of you, before I go to my study. I have some work to-night."

Mr. Kestell sat down with the paper; but he saw Amice shake her head when Elva tried to make her sing. So it was Elva who entertained him; and her sweet, clear voice, so full of joy and hope, made him forget the annoyance he felt at Amice's request.

When he was gone, the two girls were left alone, and then it was that Amice appeared gradually to thaw, like a winter flower brought into a warm room. There was a little sigh of relief when at last she went up to Elva, who was gazing out of the one window which was allowed not to be shut.

Elva was thinking over Walter Akister's words, and wishing she had not been out alone upon the moor; but she was recalled to the present by Amice's arm round her neck, and feeling a kiss imprinted on her forehead.

"Oh, Elva, darling, don't have anything to do with him; he would make you unhappy."

Elva visibly started.

"With whom?"

"Walter Akister; I know you are thinking of him."

Elva, for the first time in her life, looked at her sister with a troubled look in her eyes.

"Amice, dear, what do you mean? How could you tell? Did papa——"

Amice knelt down, and hid her face in her sister's shoulder.

"Don't ask me any questions, dearest, I shall have to answer you, and I don't want to. It is not my fault, perhaps it is because we are sisters; I have read of it in books, I think, but sometimes it frightens me myself. Don't be angry, Elva—that would only add to my misery."

"Angry with you, Amice—how could I be? We have shared everything together, haven't we, ever since we were tinies? But this one thing I thought I ought not to tell you, and then you—you—come and tell it to me. I don't understand."

Amice rose up and stood close to the window, the strange, weird light falling on her, and making her deathly-pale features appear almost supernatural.

"I don't wonder," she said, clasping her hands, "that you do not understand it. I do not either. Do you remember the evening of Mrs. Eagle Bennison's dinner-party? Well, it was then it came to me for the first time. I had been thinking of all the great things women have done for the good of others, and I wanted to be like them in the least particular. I seemed to wish to give up all these riches that surround us, and which every day made me love poverty the more;

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and then, after a long time—— Oh, dear Elva, keep my secret; tell no one, promise me."

Elva nodded her head, silently.

"It was then, as I knelt on the floor, lost in thought, that a new, strange feeling came over me. I cannot explain it; but I seemed to see things differently. I seemed to understand what others were feeling, not by word or picture, but by some sense that was quite different from anything I had ever known before. I felt that Symee was upstairs suffering and wanted me, and I went, and then—I was frightened myself to find it was true."

"But about Mr. Akister," said Elva, still inclined to think that Amice was ill; and that she had over-tired herself with tramping about to the cottages.

"That came suddenly; because it is not always with me this power, or gift, or curse. It comes and goes, and I am afraid of it; afraid of using it wrongly; afraid of despising it if it is a gift of Heaven. Elva, never tell any one."

"I never will," said Elva, feeling that, if she did, some might pronounce her sister mad. "I believe you have been over-tiring yourself, and worrying about—being too good, I think. I never feel like that. I love everything that I can enjoy, and I cannot see the harm of it."

"No, no; not for you. Don't think I am blaming you, Elva. How could I, when I love you more than any one on earth? Perhaps it is love that is teaching me. I seem to read your thoughts just now, just as if you had spoken aloud."

Elva did not believe this, though she was forced to acknowledge that Amice was right about Walter Akister; but the whole thing was so strange, so uncanny, that she put away the belief in it. The only true thing was that her sister Amice was too good, and wanted to be taken out more among other people.

"I was thinking of Walter Akister, it is true; but what else could you see, you naughty thought-reader?"

Amice smiled now. Elva took the revelation in such a matter-of-fact manner that she was a little comforted.

"Nothing except that Walter Akister was wanting you to do something, and that you were wavering, and I felt I must speak and tell you to be firm."

Elva laughed brightly now, as she kissed Amice.

"'Second thoughts are best,' is the saying; so first thoughts may be wrong, and yours are wrong, quite wrong. Walter Akister did ask me something this afternoon; but I never had the slightest idea of saying 'Yes,' and I never, never shall. Set your mind at rest about that, and don't believe these pictures."

Amice was not hurt or offended, only relieved. She tried to put away the idea of harm to Elva—that was all she cared about.

"But about Symee—how could I have known?" she added after a moment.

"Why, Amice, you are always thinking that some one or other wants you, and worrying your brains about people in trouble. It is fortunate that we live together, or you would soon be ruined. By the way, have you spent all your allowance? You will want a new dress soon. Papa, I saw, noticed the shabby serge, though he said nothing."

"Did he? I am sorry. I have spent every penny. That old Jeffery Hull has been so long out of work that I lent him some."

"Papa or Mr. Heaton would have done it. Oh, dear Amice, you ought to have no money!"

"I wish I had none. How it would help one to be good to be obliged to earn one's daily bread. Think of all the people who have no capital. What would Catherine of Sienna have said to have been rich? She never could have been."

"Oh, dear Amice, that was all very well for those days; people admired rags, and visions, and miracles then; but now nobody does really. It's much nicer to be very rich and give great sums to build People's Palaces, and Markets, and things of that sort, than to go about looking saintly. You know doctors only put it down to want of nerve-power, or morbid feelings; so it's no use at all. Then, Amice, don't mind if I say something else. I wish you wouldn't look so shy and frightened when you speak to papa. He is so dear and good he pretends not to see it; but I know his nature, and he does. He is so good to us that I can't bear his feelings being hurt."

Amice had begun her slow pacing by the drawing-room windows; there was such a hush everywhere this evening that the low, soft footfall of the girl was almost ghostly.

"I can't help it," she said, covering her face. "Elva, you don't know how hard I try to be quite, quite natural with him. This evening, when I went out on the

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bridge, I said I would speak to him as I did to you or to mamma; but, directly I came near to him, it all came over me and overpowered me."

"What came over you?" said Elva, quickly.

"That — I mean shyness, I suppose. Just as if I were being paralysed. It is worse than fear; oh, it is misery!"

Evidently, Amice could not be well, and Elva formed a plan of taking her to a doctor; but, once again, with her strong vitality and strength of will, Elva changed the conversation.

"Anyhow, it's all right about Symee. Have you told her? Jesse Vicary comes to-morrow! How he will enjoy the country after that terrible, stuffy London. I wonder if he has seen Mr. Hoel Fenner again. Now, Amice, come and sing that song you set to music the other evening. Instead of moping you ought to be a prima donna. Oh dear, I wish you had taken a fancy to the stage, you would have looked lovely, and it's easier for ladies now to sing in public than to get rid of all their money, as you wish to do."

Amice laughed softly. She was very fascinating when she looked at all happy.

"What a terrible idea; I would rather die than go behind footlights. Think of the power of all those hundreds of eyes."

"Yes, the power to applaud—I should like that."

"I would rather sing in the dirtiest room in a back slum than in a theatre," and Amice, sitting down, sang, in a rich and wondrously soft contralto, the following well-known words, which she had set to music:

"When shall I see the land where I would tread,
That shrine where I would fain bow knee and head?
In autumn—ere the autumn pass, I said;
In winter—ere the winter time is sped;
In spring—ere yet spring's fair sweet feet are fled;
In summer—ere the summer time is shed—
And now I say, perchance when I am dead."

"Amice, how beautiful!" exclaimed her sister. "Will you sing it to papa, to-morrow?"

Amice rose abruptly.

"Don't ask me, don't ask me to do that. I can't help it; but when papa comes near to me at the piano—sometimes even when he is only in the room—my voice goes. It is stupid, but how can one help being afraid? If only I were like you, and could be a comfort to him."

It was useless arguing, and Elva gave it up. She only knew that she herself loved Amice, and felt anxious about her state of health; but it was hard that the two she loved the best could so little understand each other.

CHAPTER X. COUNTRY BORN.

THE Home Farm was situated on the right hand of the Pools, and some way up the moor on the opposite side of the Beacon; and was, in fact, at the edge of the great hills before described as the Forest of Alden. All the farm land had originally been reclaimed from the moor; and certainly nothing could exceed the wild beauty of its surroundings, though it left much to be desired in point of fertility. However, some of these upland meadows produced fair pasture for the sleek Alderneys; and money being plentiful, the farm served its purpose well, and gave an honest living to Eli Deeprose and his wife Hannah. The farm-house was an old picturesque dwelling, with gables and stacks of chimneys which pointed to the days when it had been the manor, when manors were by no means the palatial places they have since become.

The way to the farm was up a narrow valley branching off from the road by the Pools. A little stream meandered sluggishly on one side, and on the other sloping fir-woods and larch-plantations made eternal music. Then the ground rose more precipitously, and the wood being past, the path now ran by a few meadows and cornfields—the harvest at present not yet gathered in—diversified by here and there a hop-garden. Then, further still, the farm buildings, with its old garden and its stack-yard, its cow-sheds, and pig-styes; and after this, high up, came the always rising stretch of forest-land, till the eye reached the summit where, high above the farm, stood the Crow's Nest clump, apparently lording it over all the lower lands as an eagle aloft upon mountain crags.

Every noble feeling seemed to be fostered by that special spot, and the noble desire for freedom was firmly implanted in the heart of the dwellers of the soil by the vast sweep of those grand high moors, which spoke to the heart of man of the purest and highest self-respect, and of giving him, with the breath of his nostrils, the command to labour honestly for his daily bread, and by the sweat of his brow to learn true freedom and true patriotism.

"Who would not be country-born, country-bred, in such a spot?"

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Such was Jesse Vicary's feeling as, finding himself, by a miracle it seemed to him, at Greystone, he took his modest bag in his hand, and walked with eager, fervent impatience to the farm. He had been born among those moors; his earliest recollections were entwined with happy memories of the woods, of the deep pools in their exquisite valley, of the farm sounds and sights and works; and, best of all, of all those miles and miles of the moorland-forest, which seemed, like eternity, to have no end.

The moment Jesse set foot in his county, though no parent voice was there to welcome him, and no home of his own awaited him, he felt happy, he could throw off the feeling of his life's burden; he could forget that such things as sin and misery existed; he could fancy no such place as London existed, and no such street as Golden Sparrow knew him. He experienced the intoxication of nature, the feeling that earth called to him as her own, and that he answered her by saying, as in old schoolboy days, "Adsum."

Once more now he came gladly to her call, and only those who have experienced this feeling can understand what was the tumultuous joy that filled his whole being as he at last passed the grey walls of Rushbrook House.

It was late afternoon, and being now so near his destination, Jesse sat down on an old bent oak-bough, where, quite hidden from view, he could see the house and the old bridge without being seen, should any of the Kestells come out.

Jesse felt a vague hope that Symee might feel his near presence, and would run out for a moment; he had not been able to tell her his train, and he was too shy to go to the house, having, besides, an undefined dislike of going to any one's back door, and not sure whether, his sister being merely a servant, he might assert his independence by going to the front entrance. He preferred doing neither; and, well hidden, he gazed longingly at the familiar sight.

The old bridge stood in the midst of trees and undergrowth; a shallow brook, spanned by its great arch — one side of which was rough and uneven from the falling away of some masonry; whilst the remaining weather-stained grey stones were crested with dark-green ivy—trickled slowly, making music like the ringing of tiny silver bells. Below and above one only saw a tangle of boughs, through which the sunlight glinted here and there, just flecking the little brown stream beneath with spots of gold.

How Jesse devoured all this with his eyes, and his heart seemed to thank Heaven, with the sincerity of a man receiving a priceless gift, for once more beholding all this with his bodily eyes. He gazed at the water, which quietly trickled towards him between its moss-grown banks and the moss-covered stones in its bed. The fields outside were bathed in sunlight, but the oaks and silver birches around him almost hid the blue sky; whilst, behind, the tall, red stems of the fir-wood stood like guarding sentinels.

Jesse listened; there was no sound but the voice of the stream, a few notes of a bird, and, all at once, the bark of a dog.

He looked up to the bridge, feeling he must pass on, when suddenly he saw some one standing there.

Jesse, though he at once identified Miss Amice Kestell, said to himself that he had never seen such a beautiful woman before. He took in every line of the head, of the neck, of the arm leaning on the bridge. He noted the pale, marble-like face, and the eyes, cast downward to the stream, so that they seemed almost closed. He even noted the white hat, with a great, grey ostrich-feather, which looked like a little soft, grey cloud that had floated down to rest like an aureole round that head. But, most of all, Jesse noted the wondrously-calm expression, as if no thought of earth were troubling the dreamer.

It was not love that made all his pulses quicken at this sight; not any earthly idea of common love came even into his mind; it was more like worship given to some angelic being, which might suddenly appear on our path.

Doubtless these feelings were partly engendered by Symee's repeated praises of Miss Amice; doubtless, at this moment, his grateful heart glorified every object he saw; perhaps, too, Nature refuses to show her best unless she can place a beautiful jewel in her most lovely setting. Whatever might be the natural reasons of the sudden transformation and the immediate result of sight upon feeling, certain it is that not stronger was the effect of the sight of Beatrice upon Dante than of Amice Kestell upon this unknown, unendowed Jesse Vicary.

Jesse was so utterly overcome with this new feeling that, even when Amice passed on, after a few minutes' meditation on the bridge, he sat on, gazing at the place

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where she had been; and when at last he rose and climbed up the path and himself crossed the bridge, he would, had he not feared being seen, have kissed the footprint Amice had made on the sandy way. Jesse did nothing of the kind, however; but he passed the Rushbrook property, passed up the valley, turned into the track leading to the farm, and, always ascending, reached it, without having been once conscious of anything but the image of Amice upon his mind's eye.

In sight of the familiar homestead, however, he partially recovered himself. You cannot go into a house dreaming. The ordinary commonplaces of common life are powerful restoratives to distraction; and, with a mighty effort, Jesse shook off his new bliss.

All at once he was entirely roused, for, at the open door, and running towards him with a glad exclamation, was his own twin sister, Symee.

There was no one in the house; everyone was out, busy at various farm labours. Mrs. Deeprose was in the dairy, on the other side of the farm-house, and only the eyes of Nature beheld the meeting.

"Oh, Jesse, Jesse, there you are. I thought you would never come."

"How could I guess you were here?" said Jesse, now quite himself, for Symee was his second self—no vision—but the twin sister he was looking for. "Do you know, Symee, I sat down opposite Rushbrook House, hoping you might come out by chance."

"Oh, you stupid boy! and all the time I was here. Why didn't you guess it?"

"How could I expect they would spare you?"

Symee, still clinging to him, laughed as she had not laughed since she had last seen him, and her sweet, gentle, though not beautiful or remarkable face, was beautified by love.

"Well, if it had not been for Miss Amice, you would not have seen me here. Isn't she good, Jesse? She asked Mrs. Kestell to spare me, and came down here herself to arrange about my staying at the farm; and, just imagine, she is going to take my place. She did it all so kindly; not a bit as if she were doing me a favour, but just as if it were my right."

"She is an angel," said Jesse, from the bottom of his heart.

"Well, something very like it. She is not like any other young lady I have ever seen. But now tell me — oh, tell me everything, only first come in, tea is ready on the table and the kettle is boiling. Oh, Jesse, this is happiness."

What a thousand little nothings these two said to each other as they sat by the homely table, eating their modest meal, which, to Jesse, tasted sweet indeed after his long, hot summer of London life. Symee asked him about his work, his friends, his acquaintances, interspersed now and then with enquiries about his wardrobe, the new shirts she was making him, the careless fashion in which he tied his tie; and he, delighted to hear a woman's soft voice taking him to task in this manner, laughed and defended himself, till, tea finished, he insisted on taking her out upon the moors, after first paying a visit to Mrs. Deeprose in her dairy. The Deeprose pair had only been a few years at the farm, and were not the couple Jesse remembered in his childhood; still, they were good friends enough, and just on those pleasant terms when nothing is expected on one side or the other but pleasant words. Jesse always paid for his lodging and board in spite of Mr. Kestell's repeated orders to the contrary; but the pleasure of feeling independent was too great, now it was attained, to be easily parted with.

Now walking up towards the Crow's Nest, whilst the shadows were lengthening and the clouds deepening into gorgeous crimson in the west, it was Jesse's turn to tell his sister of his good fortune.

"I have sent in my work, Symee," he exclaimed, after having told her of Mr. Fenner's visit; "and it may lead to some more work, but I dare not think of that. Perhaps he will write to me here. I gave him my address. Anyhow, it seems like a new life. I want to write something more congenial than those eternal tons of coals."

Their feet were pressing down the springy heather; the breeze gathering energy as they climbed higher, brought new strength to Jesse's hopes. Any feet that have been born to tread on heather will never again forget the feeling; the very muscular exertion required where the heather is thick and high is joy to such; the black peat ruts, the little gleaming pools, the crisp, dead branches of twig, the searching for the hidden sundew, the colour of the asphodel, and the scent of the bog myrtle, all these, and a hundred other sights on a moor, go to make up that heather-sickness, which seizes the Scotch when far from home, or the

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dwellers of the Surrey heaths when they wander into towns or upon down lands.

Oh, downs are beautiful, and many wonderful things can be seen there; but all these can be easily dispensed with by heath-lovers if you will give them back their forest.

For a few moments Symee shared her brother's hopes and feelings. He had so much more powerful a nature that it was easy to drag her along with him, spiritually speaking; but every human being has a certain amount of power of resistance; otherwise strange sights would be seen: armies of pilgrims going to the same place; numberless panics; slavish imitations; but to prevent this the force of the unit comes in; and, just before they reached Crow's Nest, Symee paused.

"Jesse, dear, you don't mean to say you would forget all Mr. Kestell has done, and that you would forsake the coals?"

Symee was good and gentle; but, in spite of her unit force, she was not imaginative. Coals seemed to her sufficient to warm any one's energy.

"Coals of fire you think Mr. Kestell would heap on my head? What can it matter to him what I do, so that I earn an honest living? I do not want to do more than that—a living for you and for me."

"But I am sure Mr. Kestell would not like it. He seemed quite anxious the other day about your keeping steadily to your present work."

"Don't be afraid, Symee; I shall do nothing rash. But without saying anything disrespectful—though I never can forget what I owe him, yet I am a man now, and I must be free. Heaven gives us a certain freedom in our lives, in order to make us understand the true bondage, I think."

He spoke in a brave voice, which denoted strength and honesty of purpose, so that Symee was a little reassured.

"You must not speak of me as if I were going to take all your hard-earned savings, Jesse, dear," she added, as they proceeded higher. "You must marry and be happy, and I shall come and stay with you. Oh, that will be great enough happiness for me."

"Marry!" Jesse shook his head. "I could not marry unless I saw a woman who would come up to my ideas of 'a perfect woman, nobly planned,' as Wordsworth says. And just imagine, Symee, what such a woman would say to me!"

Jesse laughed, but not bitterly.

"She would say, if she were worth anything, that you were better than any one else in the world."

"No one will ever say that but you, silly one."

And then the silence of the hills fell upon the brother and sister.

"THE CHILD OF THE OCEAN"

(THE YANGTSE-KIANG).

According to the Chefoo Convention of 1875, the city of Chung-King on the upper Yangtse-Kiang—"The Child of the Ocean"—greatest of the rivers of China, is to be declared an open Treaty Port, as soon as a steamer reaches it from the sea. For over two years Mr. Archibald Little has had a specially-built vessel waiting at Shanghai for the necessary Imperial permit to make the ascent. Time after time he has been put off, on one trivial pretext after another; but really because of the intrigues of the local mandarins, who fear the loss of their monopoly of local transit dues—called Likin—when the river traffic passes into the hands of Europeans. But the difficulties are, while we write, believed to have been overcome to this extent, that an order has been issued from Pekin to allow the steamer to proceed.

It is because the voyage of this steamer will mean the beginning of a new era in China, and of a new departure in our Oriental commerce, that we propose to give a short sketch of the Yangtse-Kiang and its potentialities.

From Shanghai, the metropolis of the coast, to Chung-King, the commercial metropolis of Western China, is a distance of some fourteen hundred miles. The first thousand miles can be accomplished in a week, for the waters of the lower Yangtse have been, since 1860, ploughed by a service of magnificent steamers as far as Hankow—about six hundred miles—and from Hankow to Ichang there are smaller Chinese steamers. But the second stretch of four hundred miles, from Ichang to Chung-King, occupies six times as long as the thousand miles from Shanghai to Ichang. It has to be performed in native boats, which boats have to be hauled by manual labour over a succession of some nine or ten rapids, which begin to break the course of the river just above Ichang.

At the foot of each rapid there is a small village, whose inhabitants make their living by hauling the junks into quiet

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water—a haulage varying in length from half a mile to a mile and a half. On the downward voyage the junks run free and swiftly with the rapid current; but the dangers from curves, sunken rocks, and whirlpools are numerous, and the wrecks of native boats frequent.

Why then attempt this difficult waterway? Because the Yangtse is practically the sole line of communication between the east and west of the great Empire of China. It is an Empire without roads, and which depends for the transport of goods upon its waterways. Now, the Yangtse River divides China Proper into two equal parts, and it is fed by innumerable tributaries navigable by boats of some kind, and these tributaries, again, are fed by smaller streams coming from the very remotest regions of the country. This network of streams intersects in every direction the very richest portions of China, including the fertile and metalliferous province of Szechuen, which is reputed one of the most densely-populated provinces of the Empire. In fact, the country tapped by the Yangtse is of such peculiar attractiveness, from a commercial and industrial point of view, that in the remote city of Chung-King — which is its centre — the native bankers and merchants are among the wealthiest of their class in China.

The great dream of our traders for many years, has been to reach Chung-King by some speedier and better method than that available by the country junks. The trade of Shanghai multiplied four times within a very few years after Hankow was opened to Europeans; so it is possible to entertain, with reason, very large expectations of the consequences which will follow the opening-up of Chung-King, connected by water as that city is with almost every part of Western China. The traffic by the junks is subject to the heavy extortions of the local authorities, under the name of "Likin;" but by our Treaty rights these dues will not be exacted on goods conveyed by British steamers, right up from the sea to Chung-King.

The point which Mr. Little set himself, some four years ago, to examine, was whether it is possible for steamers to make the passage of the gorges and the rapids safely. He was so convinced of the practicability that he came right home to England, and had a vessel built on the Clyde, to his own designs, for the peculiar character of the navigation—which requires a boat of great power, light draught, and easy and rapid handling.

But now as to these gorges and rapids, for a description of which we are indebted both to Mr. Little, who published an account of his travels last year, and to Mr. W. Spencer Percival, who devotes some chapters in his recent work about "The Land of the Dragon" to notes on a boating and shooting excursion on the upper Yangtse.

The Chinese know the Yangtse as the Kiang, "The River;" or as Chang-Kiang, "The Long River;" or as Ta-Kiang, "The Great River." Its more poetical name is that by which we know it, and which means "The Child of the Ocean." It is a monster child, for it has a flow of about three thousand miles, and in its lower courses is of immense width. But for two-thirds of its length the river runs through almost a continuous ravine, the banks of which are no wider than the river-bed. It is at the first gorge, just above Ichang, that the river leaves the mountains for ever on its way to the sea. This first gorge is one thousand miles from the mouth. From the first gorge, the ascent is by a series of wide steps, which the Chinese call Menkah, over which flow the famous rapids. These steps lead through great gorges cut through the limestone ranges which bound Szechuen on the east, and divide it from Hupeh, the Province of Broad Lakes. These limestone mountains are cut up by ravines in every direction; for every little stream has its gorge, often more picturesque, even if less imposing, than those of the great river itself. The vegetation of this well-watered country is most luxuriant, with endless varieties of ferns, and innumerable species of lovely flowering-plants.

Ichang is pretty much of what the Americans would call a "one-horse" place, and the British Consul there has to maintain what dignity he can in a very dilapidated and unofficial-looking building. Opposite the city the view is bold and picturesque — pyramid-shaped hills, with high, vertical cliffs, along the river-front, backed by a lofty range of mountains, extending to the distant horizon; neat villages and temples in groves of willow and bamboo; and the swift-flowing river in the foreground.

Ichang is famous for its otter-fisheries, of which Mr. Little gives the following note: "The opposite shore rises in pyramidal cliffs, separated by steep, narrow valleys, which just admit of a landing on

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the rocks, the conglomerate formation observed lower down shading off here into hard sandstone. Attached to the rocky shore, in a small bay sheltered somewhat from the violence of the current, the fishermen have their otter station. From the bank, and overhanging the water, depend small bamboos, like fishing-rods, to the extremity of each of which is attached an otter by an iron chain, fixed to leather thongs, crossed round the animal's chest, and immediately behind the shoulders. Some of the animals were playing in the water, and swimming as far as the length of their tether would allow them; others had hung themselves across their bamboos, resting, doubled up, and looking for all the world like otter-skins hung up to dry in the sun. When required for use, the fisherman, after casting his net, which is heavily loaded all round the foot, draws up its long neck to the water-level, and inserts the otter through the central aperture; the otter then routs out the fish from the muddy bottom and rocky crevices in which they hide. Fish, otter, and net are then all hauled on board together; the otter is released and rewarded; and a fresh cast is made."

There is a gorge called the Tiger's Teeth, some ten miles below Ichang; but the first of the series of those associated with the rapids, is some few miles above the city. Suddenly it bursts on the sight: a cleft in the mountain, out of which the Great River flows in majestic grandeur. The view and the surprise that burst upon one for the first time are, says Mr. Little, indescribable, and no pen can paint the beauty and impressiveness of the panorama that slowly unrolls as the boat is propelled through the gorge. The water is from fifty to a hundred fathoms deep, and is undisturbed by ripple or by other sound than that of the boatmen. An awful stillness broods over the scene, and clouds envelope the higher peaks along the sides of the chasm. These peaks are in striking forms: resembling now a tower and now a buttress, and everywhere vegetation takes advantage of the smallest ledge; and the air is scented with the odour of innumerable blossoms.

Through these gorges the river rushes with great velocity, and, owing to the height of the cliffs, the sails are useless, Therefore, the boats have to be tracked. A big junk, of one hundred and fifty tons. Mr. Little tells us, will carry a crew of over one hundred men, seventy or eighty of whom will be trackers, whose movements are directed by beat of drum. The drummer remains on board, under the direction of the helmsman; as well as a dozen to twenty men whose duty is to pole and to fend the boat off the boulders and rocky points as she scrapes along. Some half-dozen of the crew are told off to skip over the rocks like cats in constant attendance on the tow-line, to lift it when it gets caught in the rocks. Other three or four run along without clothing, ready to jump into the water at a moment's notice should the line get caught on a rock inaccessible from the shore.

These tow-lines are made of plaited bamboo, extremely tough and strong, and better adapted, by the smooth surface, than hempen rope would be for such haulage; but, notwithstanding this, a tow-line only lasts a single voyage.

When a critical point to be rounded is reached, one part of the crew jump ashore, and the others remain on board to pole and fend. "The helmsman meanwhile takes care to keep her as much as possible head-on to the current, and shouts to the trackers when to haul, and when to slacken. Oftentimes at the most critical moment, the manœuvres are compromised by the tow-rope catching in an almost inaccessible crevice, when we hang in a most uncomfortable position until one of the trackers runs back, climbs with his bare feet, cat-like, up the rocks, and, apparently at the risk of his life, releases us. Then when we have safely reached the comparatively smooth water, if the banks are precipitous, the whole crew jump on board and claw us along under the overhanging cliffs, two men clinging on to the rocks with their hooks, while two others, with poles, keep her off a safe distance from them. The hookers have to be mighty careful never to lose their hold, as that involves drifting back into the current, and bringing up some distance below, losing in a minute or two the fruits of hours of work."

It is dangerous and exciting navigation, and what Mr. Little decided was, that what could be done by sixty or seventy men hauling and wasting much power in shouting and jumping, could be much more effectually and quickly done by a full-powered stern-wheel steamer, of small draught, and suitable beam.

The Ichang Gorge is the first, and is about twelve and a half miles long. Then comes the Lukan Gorge, three miles, the Mitan, three and a half, and the Wushan,

twenty-two miles, respectively. The rapids between Ichang and Chung-King are ten in number, and have all to be surmounted somewhat in the manner described. The scenery of the gorges is all of the same grand and imposing character.

About midway through the Wushan Gorge is a deep, narrow cleft in the mountains, which marks the boundary-line between the provinces of Hupeh and Szechuen. It is a lonely, desolate place, with a few cottages planted on the smallest ledges on the rocky sides of the mountain. The natives of this gorge, Mr. Percival says, are so imbued with the gloom of the place, that they never laugh, seldom smile, and never talk excepting when necessary; and then as few words as possible.

Opening out from the river at various points are the most lovely and picturesque glens, which Mr. Percival spent much time in exploring. Here is a picture of one, which is fairly representative of the whole:

"After ascending through all its windings and inclinations for two or three miles, the glen sometimes widening into a large amphitheatre, at other times drawing into a narrow opening, we come to one of the most enchanting valleys I had ever seen—a perfect paradise, covered with ferns, flowers, and orchids.

"It was a lovely afternoon; a clear, mottled sky overhead, and between that and the horizon a bank of most gracefully-formed and majestic cumuli, that cast warmly-tinted shadows down the valley. Nothing was wanting, nothing could have been added to increase the loveliness of the scene. Like most of the glens, it was not more than a couple of hundred yards wide. The roads rose up on either side to a height of over a thousand feet, with ledges here and there invisible from below, but which were actually about one hundred feet wide, covered with different kinds of timber and flowering-plants of the most delicate and brilliant colours. A clear stream of the purest water ran down the hollow of the glen, broken in various places by a succession of falls, the highest not more than fifty feet, about which skimmed some lovely birds, such as I had never seen before. From the thickest parts—in the undergrowth of this wilderness of beauty, where the ferns and flowering-plants were most abundant—we turned out some magnificent Gold and Silver pheasants, and also the still more beautiful bird, the Reeve, pheasant. There you see them in all their brightness of plumage and comeliness of form and movement; in all the pride of freedom, and in all the fearless confidence of a happy, wild existence."

As all travellers concur in rapturous descriptions of the scenery of the Upper Yangtse, it is possible to imagine that when steamers begin to ply regularly, it will be a favourite resort of the more adventurous of the tourist tribe. Even the danger of shooting the rapids has its charm, and the sportsman has the prospect of shooting a good deal more, for there seems plenty of game.

An occasional leopard may be met with, in which case the traveller would do well to be better provided than was Mr. Percival, who, encountering suddenly one of these spotted creatures, had to resort to yells of "yoicks!" in order to frighten it away. He succeeded, but it was a "near thing."

Up one of the glens the rock becomes a clear, vertical precipice, some twelve hundred feet high. Midway, in the face of the cliff is a cave, with no apparent means of access. But a curious footpath has been cut to it up the face of the rock, for this cave is a gigantic temple, inhabited by a number of priests in charge of a hundred joss-images.

"The interior of the temple is both curious and picturesque, and its extraordinary situation most remarkable. Situated about midway in a vertical rock, upwards of a thousand feet high, with no possible approach from the outside, the only entrance being by the winding, tortuous path up the back of the mountain, terminating in a narrow ledge hewn out of the cliff, in a vast wilderness of mountains, which few foreigners have ever seen. In the interior there hangs from the roof some huge stalactites, many feet in length, while numerous others, both large and small, run up the sides of the cavern like pillars, from the floor to the roof. Round the sides are many recesses in the walls, into which, at different degrees of elevation, have been placed many josses, both of good and bad qualities, each occupying his own particular compartment."

Near Ichang there is a fine waterfall—not on the river—which takes an unbroken leap of eight hundred feet. There also is the cavern of the Dragon King, in which is a vast subterranean lake of unknown depth, and extending right into the heart of the mountain. This lake is the feature of the

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district, its subdued light at the entrance gradually darkening, and ending in the most pitchy blackness, as you try to make your gaze pierce the far-away depths of the cavern. "Its deathlike stillness," says Mr. Percival, "and the uncanny, soft, and attractive appearance of the water, combined with its unknown size and unfathomed depth, makes it one of the terrors of the superstitious Chinese. Of course the resident priests tell you that no one ever comes out again, who is foolhardy enough to venture in; but this is the same old story you hear from them everywhere regarding caves and unknown holes, of whose further recesses little or nothing is known, and as the Buddhist priests hold considerable influence over the people, of course no one ever does go in, each one implicitly believing the priests' assertion, and so the mystery and superstition are preserved."

This subterranean lake will, doubtless, recall to the reader Coleridge's dream of where

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure dome decree
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea.

The city of Chung-King, at the upper end of the gorges, and the objective point of Mr. Little's efforts to establish steam communication, is a picturesque place. From whichever point you regard the city, Mr. Little says, the view is one of interest and variety; each aspect forming a new picture of rock, river, wood, and temple, crenellated battlements and uplifted roofs, crowded with bewildering detail. It is a large and magnificent-looking city; but, like all Chinese towns, will not bear close inspection.

A feature of this part of the country is the absence both of plain and of barren hill, every inch of land being either under cultivation or wooded—except round about the towns, where the cemeteries take up more room than the houses.

A British Consular Agent has, since the murder of Augustus Margary, resided at Chung-King; and there, also, are stations of the American Methodist, the China Inland, and the Roman Catholic Missions. The latter claims some three thousand converts in the city alone.

The idea is that when Chung-King is thoroughly opened to European traders, it will become a second Shanghai. The agricultural wealth of the provinces of Szechuen and Yunnan is enormous, and the people are most industrious. The mineral resources are also very great. The traffic conducted by the native junks, up and down the river, is already large; but the dangers and length of the journey, the many risks to cargo and life, and the extortions of some eight or ten local customhouses, put a heavy premium upon it. When steamers are allowed to run upon the upper Yangtse, the produce of the country will be brought in ever-increasing quantity to Chung-King, and, in return, a vast market will be opened up for British manufactures.

In short, the Yangtse-Kiang is not only one of the most picturesque rivers in the world, but it presents the especial interest of being the coming medium of an enormous addition to the commerce of the nations.

ABOUT SOME ALLEGORICAL BOOKS.

THE mediæval mind took a strange delight in the invention of allegories; though, probably, there is no field of literary effort in which success is so rare, and failure so frequent. None but a very rich and fertile genius can cultivate it with advantage; can make it bear a harvest which it is worth the while of the reader to gather in. Nothing more tedious is there in prose or verse—not even an indifferent parody—than an indifferent allegory; and yet, as I have hinted, allegories are generally indifferent. It is only now and then that a Spenser produces a "Faerie Queen," or a Bunyan a "Pilgrim's Progress," or an Addison so delicate a piece of work as a "Vision of Mirza." An allegory is apt to run away with its author, like an ill-conditioned steed, and to involve him in dismal swamps and sloughs of despond from which he is unable to escape; thereby justifying, though in a sense she never intended, Mrs. Malaprop's celebrated simile: "Headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile." Yet there is something fascinating, no doubt, about this form of composition; and we suppose the mediæval writers were attracted by the opportunities it afforded for the display of petty ingenuities, and by the pomp and circumstance with which it invests even the barrenest idea. For instance, to say that the contention between Truth and Falsehood is generally arduous and prolonged, but that,

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in the long run, Truth will prevail, is a statement of so bold and vague a character, that no reader would give it a moment's consideration. But put it in another form, say that the spotless maiden Aletheia, and the deceitful witch Mendacia, waged war against each other through long ages, in order to gain possession of the fair land of Human Reason, and that the former, assisted by good genii, triumphed, and you construct a fabric of fiction which many passers-by will pause to examine. And this was the artifice of the mediæval writers. It was thus they dressed up their crude ideas; their fantastic sentiments; their favourite platitudes; and, by the aid of allegory, gave them quite a novel and even attractive appearance. They were wise in their generation. In any other shape we may be sure their efforts would never have survived; but, as allegories, they have received respectful treatment, and been handed down from generation to generation to amuse the curiosity of the literary student in his idler hours.

These depreciatory remarks, however, do not apply—at least, without some qualification—to the most celebrated of the mediæval allegories, the "Romaunt de la Rose." Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, flourished Guillaume de Lorris, whom Marot—not very happily—named "The French Ennius." To his lively and prolific fancy, French literature owes the earlier portion of this great allegory, the main theme of which, as he tells us in his opening verse, is the art of love:

> Ce est il Rommanz de la Roze,
> Ou l' art d'amors est tote inclose.

Guillaume de Lorris is supposed to have died about 1261. Forty years after, his poem was taken up and completed by Jean de Meung, who has almost unanimously been accepted as the greatest poet, and one of the finest scholars of his age. The section written by Lorris numbers four thousand and seventy lines. Jean de Meung added fully eighteen thousand, conceived in a much more daring spirit, enriched with truer poetic feeling, and animated by a loftier purpose. "The timid grace of one young poet was followed by the bold wit of another, who was crammed with the scholarship of his time, and poured it out in diffuse illustration of his argument; but who, a man of the people, alive with the stir of his time against polished hypocrisy, annoyed priests with his satire, and court ladies with a rude estimate of their prevailing character. Underneath all Jean de Meung's part of the 'Romaunt of the Rose' is a religious earnestness that gave its verses currency, and made them doubly troublesome to those who dreaded free thought and full speech."

The action of the poem takes place in a dream, in which the poet is conducted by Idleness to the Palace of Pleasure, where he meets Love and his gay company, who attend him to a bed of roses. He selects one, and is about to gather it, when he is wounded by Cupid's arrow, swoons, and is carried far away from the chosen flower. On his recovery, he determines at all hazards to win his rose; and, after many adventures, ultimately succeeds in reaching it, and is permitted by Venus to touch it with his lips. Then new complications ensue. All the virtues and vices, personified, flit across the stage; the temptations of the world are severally passed in review; and the progress of the soul, towards the fulfilment of its high destiny, is dimly hinted at.

An allegorical poem, very little known, which belongs to the same period, is the "Songe d'Enfer," or Vision of Hell, by Raoul de Houdan. It begins as follows:

"Fables are often revealed by dreams. I dreamed one day that I had become a pilgrim, and, anxious to see some region which no others had visited, resolved on a journey to Hell."

The pilgrim-poet first reaches the town of Covetousness, where he meets with Envy, Avarice, and Rapine. Avarice asks him for news of his subjects, and he replies that Wealth has driven out Liberality, of which only the name is now remembered. Rapine puts a similar question, and is informed that the kingdom which she has established in Poitou is in a flourishing condition; and the poet then goes off into a bitter invective against the Poitevins. Continuing his wandering, he comes upon the abode of Cheatery, to whom he puts several questions respecting certain bourgeoise of Paris and Chartres, who possessed the secret of always winning at play. The poet passes on to Tavern-town, where he finds Drunkenness, with his son, a native of England—an allusion to the drunken habits of our forefathers which makes one wince. The young man is so robust that he overthrows the strongest. Thence Raoul proceeds to Lewdness, and, finally, arrives at the gates of Hell, which is guarded by Murder, Despair, and Sudden

Death. He is surprised, on entering, to see that the tables are all served, and yet the gate is wide open.

'Tis the great court-day of the King of Hell, who is holding a review of his subjects, including many Bishops, Priests, and Abbés. He makes everybody take a seat at his hospitable board, and before the pilgrim sets a dish of the flesh of a usurer and a black monk; the former of whom had grown fat on other people's property, and the latter on idleness. As Raoul has no liking for such viands, Beelzebub converses with him, enquiring as to the purpose of his journey. Towards the close of the repast his Infernal Majesty calls for his great black book, in which are recorded all the sins that have been or are to be. He put it into the hands of the traveller, who, opening at the chapter "Of Minstrels," finds therein the life of each set forth. "I got it by heart," he says, "and can repeat to you some curious passages." But at this moment he awakes, and dream and story terminate together.

Meschinot, known as le Banni de Liesse, a poet who flourished towards the end of the fifteenth century, composed a collection of poems entitled, "Les Lunettes des Princes" (1473)—lunettes, or spectacles, specially designed for the noses of Popes, Emperors, Kings, and Princes, and the author assures us

Que jamais l'œil ne vit telles besicles,

that never has the eye seen such glasses. Reason, perceiving his depression at having lost his fortune, presents him with a little memorandum-book, entitled "Conscience," and then with spectacles intended to facilitate his reading and to render it profitable. On one of them is written "Prudence," on the other "Justice." The ivory framework is named "Strength," and the iron band which unites them "Temperance." In this artificial strain Monsieur Meschinot hobbles through a number of quarto pages.

Among the allegorical works published at different periods were grammars, mystical treatises, pamphlets, and the like. I propose to allude to the most curious.

Guarua, an Italian littérateur of the fifteenth century, is the author of "Grammaticæ Opus Novum mira quadam arte et compendiosa, sur Bellum Grammaticale." After describing the Kingdom of Grammar as governed by two Kings—the Noun and the Verb—the author narrates their struggles for pre-eminence. War breaks out between the two rivals, who take steps to augment their forces, the one calling to his aid the Adjective and the other the Participle. Victory rests with the Verb; and the Noun prefers to him a request for peace, which is finally concluded through the intervention of some grammarians.

Hoppers, a Dutch jurisconsult, published in 1656 his "Seduardus, sive de vera jurisprudentia," in twelve books, four of which treat of legislation, four of public rights, and four of civil rights. The work is a kind of drama, which passes on shipboard, and the dramatis personæ are the author's four sons.

The first work of the celebrated Neapolitan advocate, Gennaro, is entitled "Respublica Jurisconsultorum" (1731). The author imagines the existence of an isle in the Mediterranean, whither all jurisconsults repair after death, and where they have founded a commonwealth on the lines of the old Roman Republic; that is, it is divided into the three orders: senators, knights (equites), and plebeians. To the first order belong all those jurisconsults who lived from Sextus Papirius to Modestinus, under whom the Roman jurisprudence began to decay; to the second, those who since the time of Modestinus have taught the science of law at Rome, Constantinople, and elsewhere, as well as all those authors who, from Alciat down to the eighteenth century, have been distinguished in the study of jurisprudence. And the third includes the Accursi, the Bartolos, and all other jurisconsults who have carried into the science a spirit of subtlety and quibbling, or have discussed none but futile, painful, and ridiculous questions. At the time of Gennaro's visit to the island, he pretends that Ulpian and Papinian were consuls; that Cujas was proctor; that Servius Sulpicius presided over the senate, while Cato and Irnerius acted as censors. Notwithstanding the dryness of the subject, the book abounds in humorous allusions and felicitous turns of wit.

To afford the reader some idea of the prevailing tone in mystical allegories, I shall refer to a couple of books by the fanatical Calvinist, William Huntington, S. S., or Sinner Saved, as he lived to subscribe himself. In early life he passed through the successive stages of errand-boy, ostler, gardener, cobbler, and coal-heaver; was "converted;" set forth as an itinerant preacher; rose into repute; and settled down in Gray's Inn Lane, London, as a

popular minister. His works amount to at least a score of volumes, of which I shall notice, first, the one entitled "God the Protector of the Poor and the Banker of the Faith," which is based on the idea that God and Man, by means of faith, carry on a kind of trading. The divine promises are the Christian's bank-notes. A living faith will draw always upon the Divine Banker, who often discharges the bills at sight, and, at all events, much sooner than we have dared to hope. The spirit of prayer, he says, and a pressing need inspire the truly devout mind to address itself to Heaven's inexhaustible treasury. And he adds some narratives to illustrate the living hope and trust of the redeemed sinner, drawing thus upon his Creator; and the Divine Providence condescending, through unexpected windfalls, to honour every kind of draft which comes to Him upon the wings of prayer.

The other book to which I shall allude is "The Voyage," which is a spiritual voyage, made by the author, on board the ship "Grace"—Jesus, Captain; bound for the city of Zion. Frequently buffeted by storms, the ship, nevertheless, doubles safely the Cape of Good Hope; but, when in sight of port, is attacked and captured by the pirate-vessel, "Dissolution," Captain Death in command. At the moment, however, of the pirate's expected triumph, the thunder peals, and Heaven's lightnings smite the "Dissolution" from mast-head to keel; Death sinks in the sea; and the captives disembark, safe and radiant.

One of the most celebrated of the allegorical shadow-lands of the romancist is "Le Pays de Tendre," or Land of Tenderness, created by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and minutely described in her "Clélie." Sister Clélie is supposed to be explaining a map of it to the Princesse des Léontins:

"The first town, here at the bottom of the map, is New Friendship. As the feeling of tenderness may arise from either one of three different causes—esteem, gratitude, or inclination, the inhabitants, under Clélie's directions, have erected three towns of Tenderness, on three different rivers, each with a separate name, and have devised three different ways of approaching them. So that as men say Cumac on the Ionian Sea, and Cumac on the Tyrrhenian, the people of 'Le Pays de Tendre' say Tenderness-upon-Inclination, Tenderness-upon-Esteem, and Tenderness-upon-Gratitude." Nevertheless, as Clélie took it for granted that the Tenderness which springs from Inclination needs nothing else to make it what it is, she has not planted any village along the banks of this delightful river, whose current carries you with indescribable swiftness from Friendship to Tenderness. But when you go to Tenderness-upon-Esteem, the case is different; and, accordingly, Clélie has ingeniously established on the route as many villages as there are things great and small which may help to develop from Esteem the Tenderness here indicated. Thus you will perceive that from New Friendship you first proceed to a place called Great Intelligence, because it is this which usually kindles into life the earliest sparks of Esteem. Next, in succession, you observe the three pleasant villages of Pretty-Rhymes, Billet-Galant, and Billet-Doux, which mark the most common operations of Great Intelligence in the early stages of Friendship. Afterwards, to expedite your progress by this route, you pass through Sincerity, Large-Heartedness, Probity, Generosity, Respect, Exactitude, and Goodness, which last lies close by Tenderness. After this, you must return to New Friendship, in order to survey the road which leads to Tenderness-upon-Gratitude. Here observe that the first stage takes you to Complaisance. Next, to a little village named Submission; and then to a charming one, at no great distance, called Little Attentions ("Petits Soins"); whence you proceed to Assiduity, and to yet another village, named Earnestness ("Empressement"); and so on to Great Services, which, in order to indicate how few people render them, is represented as the smallest of all. Afterwards, your road leads to Sensibility; to Obedience; and, finally, to Constant Friendship, which is, no doubt, the safest way to reach the desired goal of Tenderness-upon-Gratitude.

But as there is no road from which one cannot stray, Clélie has so contrived it that if any bound for New Friendship deviate ever so little on either hand, they will get into difficulties. If, on starting from Great Understanding, they turn aside to Negligence, and, afterwards, continuing in the same direction, go on to Inequality, thence to Lukewarmness, to Levity, and to Forgetfulness, they will find themselves, not at Tenderness-upon-Esteem, but at the Lake of Indifference, whose tranquil waters exactly represent the feeling, or want of feeling, after which it is named. On the other hand, if, on setting out from New Friendship, they turn a little to the left,

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and wander on to Indiscretion, to Perfidy, to Pride, to Slander or to Malice, they would find themselves, not at Tenderness-upon-Gratitude, but at the Sea of Enmity, where all vessels make shipwreck. The River Inclination falls into the Sea Dangerous; beyond which lie the "Terræ Incognitæ," or Unknown Lands, so called because we really know nothing about them!

All this is very ingenious, no doubt; but to our thinking, it is also very tedious, and one cannot estimate very highly the critical faculty or literary taste of a generation which went into raptures over Mademoiselle de Scudéry's allegorical map of "The Land of Tenderness." There was actually a Bishop — Godeau, Bishop of Vence—who poured out lyrical panegyrics upon "cette carte si jolie, si belle, si galante, et si pleine d'esprit!" And so great was its popularity that it led to imitation. For the Abbé d'Aubignac soon afterwards published his "Histoire du Temps, ou Rélation du Royaume de la Coquetterie, extraite du dernier voyage des Hollandais aux Indes du Levant," which Mademoiselle de Scudéry denounced as an imitation of her "Carte de Tendre." The Abbé defended himself with firmness against the stigma of plagiarism. "What relation is there between the two books?" he indignantly exclaimed, "to suggest that either borrowed from the other? In the 'Carte de Tendre,' there are four towns, three rivers, two seas, a lake, and thirty little villages lying along different roads, so close to one another that travellers have no time to get fatigued. In the 'Kingdom of Coquetry,' you will find no rivers, and only a passing allusion to the sea; there is but one large town, and the highways are nowhere crowded with resting-places! It is a country where you must travel at a good pace, and make long stages, if you wish to reach its boundaries. Again: in Mademoiselle's little map what will you find in any particular resembling the Square of the Place of Cajolery, the Tournament of the Gilded Cars, the Combat of the Flowing Petticoats, the King's Square, the Palace of Good Fortunes, the Bureau of Rewards, the Abode of Coquettes, and the Chapel of Holy Return? Tenderness is, with me, merely a little bit of a ground in the Land of Friendship; and the Kingdom of Coquetry is of vast extent, comprising everything which can render a state considerable, and governed by all the maxims of a high policy. It has its King, its religion, its laws, its schools, its trade, its public games, its warehouses, and its different classes."

The Rosicrucian romance, "Les Entretiens du Comte de Gabalis," by the Abbé de Villars, to which Lord Lytton was indebted in his "Zanoni," has an allegorical character. Then there are the "Relation de l'Ile Imaginaire;" and Sorel's "Description de l'Isle de Portraiture;" and Madame d'Aulnoy's "L'Ile de la Felicité;" Dixmérie's "L'Ile Taciturne et l'Ile Enjouée;" and Carraccioli's "Voyage de la Raison en Europe."

Usually, the allegorist places the scene of his little drama in an island, as, by so doing, he obtains freer scope for his imagination, and more readily secures the reader's interest.

Of political allegories, probably the most famous—its title, indeed, has passed into daily speech—is the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More, which so imposed upon Budæus, that he gravely proposed to despatch a mission for the conversion of the inhabitants of More's imaginary island. It was begun, probably, in 1515, and completed early in the following year, towards the end of which it was printed at Louvain, under the supervision of Erasmus. Its first appearance in England was in an English translation by Ralph Robinson, 1551. The hero is a certain Raphael Hythloday—ὕθλος, δαίος, "learned in small things" — who, having accompanied Amerigo Vespucci on his voyages, does not return with him to Spain, but is left at Gulike, whence he continues his travels, and falls in with the hitherto undiscovered island of Utopia, or "Nowhere." "The Republic of Plato," says Hallam, "no doubt furnished More with the germ of his perfect society; but it will be unreasonable to deny him the merit of having struck out the fiction of its real existence from his own fertile imagination; and it is manifest that some of his most distinguished successors in the same walk of romance, especially Swift, were largely indebted to his reasoning as well as inventive talents."

"The New Atlantis" of Bacon was obviously suggested by the "Utopia." It was never finished, and no comparison, therefore, can be instituted between it and its exemplar. The object in both is to describe an ideal state, "the best mould of a commonwealth," which is also the object of James Harrington's "Oceana" (1656); but whereas More's ruling principle is that

of "a community of wealth," Harrington's is that of "an equal agrarian basis, rising into the superstructure, or three orders: the senate debating and proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing, by an equal rotation, through the suffrage of the people given by ballot." "Oceana" is England, "Marpesia" Scotland, "Panopoea" Ireland, "Corannus" Henry the Eighth, "Parthenia" Queen Elizabeth, and "Megaletor" Cromwell. It is by no means a lively book; but some portions are ingenious, and all of it is worth reading.

The "Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Royalty of both Sexes, from the New Atalantis," an island in the Mediterranean (1736), by Mrs. De La Rivière Manley, takes an allegorical form, but cannot be described with accuracy as an allegory. As Bishop Warburton says, it is unpleasingly distinguished by its "loose effeminacy of style and sentiment," and much of its scandal is now incomprehensible.

ABOUT OLD PARIS.

JUST now that all the world has been, or is, thinking—perhaps too late—that it ought to go to Paris, it may be a fitting time to recall some of the ancient features of a city, the charm of which is still so strong upon its recent visitants. It may be said that there is no such thing as "old Paris;" that she—meaning Paris—is ever young and charming; and that what we have to talk about may be more fitly termed young Paris, or infant Paris, or earlier still, as embryo Paris. And it is certainly true that, through all its changes, the city had only become more gay and sprightly than ever. The terrible experiences it has gone through have left no wrinkled traces behind, and living fully up to the present, it has little thought to bestow on an utterly vanished past. Yet some of its visitors have a curiosity to know and to realise what the city may have been in the earlier stages of its existence. And although in existing Paris the monuments of antiquity are few and far between, yet the general anatomy of the old city may be still traced in the new.

The period of transition which may give us the best view of the remains of the old city and the beginning of the new, is to be found in the seventeenth century. And that is the period when Paris becomes for the first time picturesquely and entirely visible to its neighbours across the Channel. The traditionary friendship and alliance between the House of Stuart and the French brought about a constant intercourse between the two nations. The highway from London to Dover became frequented with people travelling between the two capitals. Never since the days of the pilgrimages to the shrine of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, had old Watling Street seen so much traffic up and down. Coaches, with gay Madames on board, Princesses, or Duchesses, as it might happen, lumbered over the broad, chalky tracks; the King's posts were urgent and frequent, and bands of gentlemen, booted and spurred, rode past at full speed in attendance upon some great lord. Then there were stage-waggons and coaches for humbler folk; and as people dined, and supped, and slept upon the way, tavern-keepers flourished, and towns and villages on the route benefited by the traffic.

In the present age it would not strike people as a feasible way of beginning the journey to Paris, to call a pair of oars from London Bridge stairs, and so sail down the river with bag and baggage. Yet the Thames then formed part of the great highway. Down to Gravesend by barge or wherry, and the land journey across Kent is considerably shortened. At the present day, hop-pickers, and others on the tramp, take the steamer thus far, on their way into Mid-Kent. Worthy John Evelyn, on his way to Paris, in 1643, rowed with a pair of oars as far as Sittingbourne, passing up the Swale, the channel that forms the Isle of Sheppey, and then by Milton Creek to his destination, but was exposed to a "horrid storm" in the open water off Sheerness, where the winds blow, and the waves beat, to a considerable tune, even now on a bleak November day.

But at Sittingbourne our shrewd traveller was more than half way to Dover, and had saved a large proportion of his posting charges. And at Dover there were always vessels waiting, which, with anything like a fair wind, carried passengers over to Calais in five or six hours.

At an earlier period, Sandwich had been the most frequented port for continental traffic, and Rye had subsequently come into favour; but now, nearly all people of condition travelled by way of Dover. And from Calais, on the other side of the Channel, there was a regular service of

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"messageries," all the way to Paris. Our traveller, having dined at Calais at mid-day, takes horse, and accompanies the coach.

The way is long, and not without danger, for Spain and the Empire are at war with France; and although Rocroi has been fought, and the future "great Condé" hailed as victor, there are still plundering bands to be feared, whether of Spaniards, or of discharged soldiers from the French army. Yes, it was during that victorious war that Alsace was annexed to the Kingdom of France. The great Cardinal was recently dead, and the King had followed him to the tomb; Louis the Fourteenth was an infant in his cradle, and Anne of Austria and Mazarin ruled the destinies of France.

As to how Paris looked just then to our travellers descending upon it along the Royal highway from the north, we have some evidence in a plan of Paris—a perspective bird's-eye view rather than a plan, but that is so much the better for our purpose—drawn by one Merlam, in the year 1615. With but few changes and alterations, this plan, copied and re-copied, did duty till the middle of the century.

We approach the city, then, from the Abbey of Saint Denis, having stayed there awhile to visit the tombs of the Kings, and the riches of the treasury, which have hitherto been safe from sacrilegious hands, and we have seen from the summit of the neighbouring hill the towers and spires innumerable of old Paris, with a glimpse of the fair river as it issues from the dark masses of roofs and buildings.

While the grass-covered ramparts of the city are still at some distance, the coach and its attendant cavalcade are brought up at a bridge and gate, the former crossing the not very savoury open conduit which drains the upper part of the city, and which forms the boundary of the Octroi, where the municipal taxes are levied on the various goods which may be brought into the city. The gate is called the Fausse Porte Saint Denys, and the district between the, so to speak, sham gate of the Octroi and the actually fortified portal of the city wall is, in the same way, the Faubourg. And this distinction prevails all round Paris, and it will be found by our descendants in the nineteenth century, that this distinction is still preserved in the old streets of Paris. Thus, the Rue Saint Martin, when it has crossed the inner boulevard, becomes the Rue du Faubourg Saint Martin; and so with many others.

The ramparts themselves, which we are now approaching, date from the fourteenth century, and were the work of Charles the Fifth. The Parisians, zealous for the league, had manned them against the forces of Henry the Fourth, who, however, contented himself with a strict investment of the city, which caused something like a famine within the walls.

The Spanish Ambassador, who took part in the defence of the city, is said to have recommended the Parisians to grind up the old bones in their great cemetery of the Innocents, to make them bread; a piece of advice which, perhaps, had some influence in forwarding the eventual reconciliation between the Parisians and their King. But for all that, the walls are evidently now out of date; the city has outgrown them. The slopes are laid out in gardens; here and there the ramparts are crowned with windmills; yet do these grassy bulwarks afford a pleasant promenade to the Parisians, who, on Sundays and days of fête, come out in swarms to enjoy the fresh air upon their green slopes, and watch the mummers and mountebanks, who set up their booths in every spare corner. Before this seventeenth century is finished the ramparts will all be levelled, and planted with avenues of trees, will form a green cincture round the city. And so, in course of time, the Parisians, continuing to resort to them as eagerly as ever, these ramparts will be known as the Boulevards, and form one of the most characteristic features of the future Paris.

Yet within the circuit of the walls of Charles the Fifth, we shall find an earlier enceinte, with fragments of old walls and towers existing here and there—at the date of our seventeenth century visit—but destined to disappear, bit by bit, in the more recent improvements. These are the walls of Philip Augustus, the rival of our Cœur de Lion, and the conqueror of Normandy from our King John. His were the high and gloomy walls, the massive flanking round towers, with their conical roofs, the square and massive keep, or Bastille, which frowned upon the great highway that approached the city from the eastwards. His, too, was the low, squat tower of the Louvre, which was the starting-point of the wall on the western side.

Before Philip's time, the real Paris was confined to the great island in the Seine, which contains the Cathedral-church of Notre Dame, and the Palais, that seat of ancient Justice, which has remained there

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since the days of the Roman empire. The isle, indeed, is the veritable Lutetia favoured by more than one Emperor, and destined by nature to become the seat of empire itself, no matter who might come or go. But a strongly-guarded tête du pont, on both banks of the river, preserved the command of the mainland on either side: that to the north being the Grand, and the southern the Petit Châtelet, which continued to be seats of the justice of the city long after their original uses were forgotten.

On the south side of the river, too, Philip enclosed, with his walls and turrets, the whole quarter of the University, and this enceinte was in existence, and tolerably perfect, when the plan of Paris, on which we are working, was prepared. It stretched, in a semicircle, from the tower of Tournelle, on the east—where, in the nineteenth century is the Halle aux Vins—to the great Tour de Nesle, on the west; the last one hundred and twenty feet high, with massive walls—a conspicuous object from all the surrounding country.

It was Mazarin who, soon after our imaginary visit, levelled the Tour de Nesle and the adjoining walls, and built upon the site his "College of the four Nations," intended for the education of the youth of Alsace, of Roussillon, and of the slice of Italy and Flanders which had been annexed to France during the Cardinal's lease of power, while along the line of ancient walls, was projected a new street, which still bears the name of the wily Cardinal, its projector; the College of the four Nations now forming part of the Palace of the Institut.

Originally the Tuileries and its gardens were outside the city wall; but they were presently enclosed with ditch and rampart, as well as a considerable portion of the surrounding country. And these ramparts, as shown upon the plan, indicate the future line of the Boulevards des Capucines and des Italiens. The inner wall between the Tuileries and Louvre seems to have formed a kind of terrace between the two palaces. Following the trace of this inner wall, where the Palais Royal was subsequently built by Cardinal Richelieu, there exists in the plan of 1613 a double avenue of trees and an open space, written down as the "Palmail," where sundry figures are to be seen playing the game of "palmall," furnished with long sticks like golf-clubs. There is another Palmail shown at the other end of Paris, behind the Arsenal, where is now the Quai Henry the Fourth. The former of these is probably the model of our Mall in St. James's Park, and the germ of London's famous street of club-houses.

At the first general view of Paris as it appeared to our forefathers in the seventeenth century, we are struck with the overpowering number of churches, monasteries, friaries, stately abbeys, and nunneries of every description. The great abbeys in the outskirts give their names to corresponding streets within the city, and to the adjacent districts. Saint Denis, Saint Martin, Saint Antoine, rule the city north of the river, and the great and wealthy abbey of Saint Germain gives its name to a whole quarter on the south. Among the mass of houses, with their gabled ends and curiously-carved timbers rising storey over storey to an immense height, the great hotels of the grands seigneurs make open spaces here and there, with gardens, and groves, and secluded alleys of verdure. The bridges are pleasant to see, with rows of houses on each side, showing quaint pignons and elaborate sculptures. But the Pont Neuf is there, too, in the full gloss of its newness; an open bridge of more modern aspect, with the equestrian statue of Henry the Fourth in the centre. Across the confused mass of buildings from north to south, two main thoroughfares pierce their way—the Rues Saint Denys and Saint Martin—and these are continued under one name or another across isle and city to corresponding gateways on the south side. From east to west there is only the great Rue Saint Honoré, which with various turns and winds, and under different names, carries a distinct track from the Porte Saint Antoine, under the shadow of the Bastille, to the Butte Saint Roche, close by the Tuileries.

So is our ancient Paris compact and symmetrical, almost circular in form, and well to be taken in at a coup d'œil from any high point, such as the Tour Saint Jacques de la Boucherie, the walled city with the river flowing through, and forming the central islet, the Acropolis of the State—the river more animated and charged with life than at any period since. A river with every variety of craft gaily skimming its surface; great passage-boats hauled against the stream, a hundred barges loaded with goods of every description; the gondola of the grand seigneur, skiffs and pleasure-boats darting

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to and fro, and the craft of the watermen moored in clusters by the quays and public stairs.

Passing quietly down the stream of time we come to the earliest complete guide-book to Paris, compiled by one Germain Brice, a man who knew the Paris of his day by heart, and who acted as guide and interpreter to strangers of distinction for nearly half a century. In 1687, Brice's book had reached a second edition, upon which our notes on old Paris will be founded. But the work was reprinted again and again, and the latest edition we have met with was published in 1752.

Many alterations had been made in Paris between the early part of the seventeenth century and its closing years. Richelieu had been at work, building the Palais Royal and piercing the street which still bears his name. Mazarin we have already seen at work on the other side of the river. But it was the age of Louis the Fourteenth which made the most havoc among the relics of the mediæval city. The lofty towers and richly-sculptured portals of the Gothic style are succeeded by the squat domes, the classic orders, the heavy sterile designs of the architects of the great monarch.

But we have the theatres. To begin with, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the most ancient theatre in Europe, where comedy had been at home for upwards of four centuries. The beginning, according to what Monsieur Brice has been able to gather about the matter, was a certain "Confrèrie de la Passion," composed of comedians, who performed moral and miracle plays under the protection of the Church. But these, taking to mundane and more or less naughty pieces, were driven out by the fathers of the Church; but were encouraged and restored by one of the ancient Dukes of Burgundy, who gave them this hotel. In Brice's time, the Italian players are in possession here; never better lodged or better players than now, when crowds go there to admire Arlequin.

Then there is the theatre which Richelieu built at the corner of his Palace—close to the site of the nineteenth century Comédie Française — intending it for the Tragic Muse, but Molière had it afterwards, and when Monsieur Brice wrote, it was occupied for opera. An abbé was the founder of the opera—one Abbé Perrin, who took as his model that of Venice. He searched all Languedoc, noted for its choirs, and drew all the best singers from the churches and elsewhere. Perrin, with two partners, one a man of quality, whom Monsieur Brice is too respectful to name, establish a new theatre at the Tennis Court, in the Rue Mazarin, opposite the Rue Guenegand, and here they produced their first opera, "Pomone," March, 1672, book by Perrin, music by Cambert, who was organist at Saint Honoré. The new opera ran for thirteen months; but in spite of this success, quarrels ensued among the triple management, and Perrin transferred the whole of his share to Lully, the King's chief musician. Lully, to rid himself of the other two, built a theatre in the Rue Vaugirard, by the help of Vigarani, mechanist to the King. But then Molière died, and the King was induced to give Lully the theatre at the Palais Royal, and the comedians had to shift their quarters to the Tennis Court, Rue Mazarin. And here they remained in Monsieur Brice's time, "it being the only place where French pieces are now represented. Formerly there were three"—the Palais Royal, the Marais du Temple, and the Hôtel de Bourgogne; but between the Opera and the Italian mountebanks, we have come to this! But courage, good Monsieur Brice, the comedy of France is not destined to extinction!

Then we have a description of the bridges, and Pont Notre Dame must have been especially nice, with houses on each side, with great statues of men and women carrying baskets of fruit in their hands, and, between each pair, medallions, on which are represented the Kings of France. By this bridge, always, the Queens enter Paris; and, when Isabel of Bavaria entered —Queen of Charles the Sixth—the bridge was all covered with blue taffetas, bordered with golden fleur-de-lis. And they say, that, as part of the pageant, an angel darted from the tower of Notre Dame and placed a crown of gold on the head of the Queen. But the Pont au Change, which was also covered with houses, has disappeared, and is replaced by a temporary wooden bridge. The bridge was burnt down in 1639.

And the mention of this last catastrophe brings to mind a reflection by Monsieur Brice, on the singular immunity that Paris has always enjoyed from extensive and destructive fires. One would have thought that with the tall timber houses, six and seven storeys high—such as had existed in Paris since the days of Philip Augustus—ranged in narrow streets where the light of

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day hardly penetrated, fires would have been constant, and would have laid waste whole quarters. But none such have occurred within Monsieur Brice's memory, and he gives a hint of the cause. There was an affair of a talisman—Geoffrey of Tours is the authority—a plate of lead found under the gutter of a bridge, which was engraved with the representation of "a serpent, a water-rat, a flame." This curiosity, placed in the light of day, gave rise to curious effects. Serpents began to crawl about, armies of rats invaded the city, constant fires burst forth. At last, with due ceremony, the leaden plate was put to bed again, and, from that moment, there was no more trouble.

That the people of Paris still retained a morsel of heathen superstition about them, is also evidenced by what happened at the abbey church of Saint Germain, where a statue of the goddess Isis, dug up from some foundations, became the object of popular devotion, and was therefore ground to powder by the scandalised fathers of the abbey. Then we have La Grève, in front of the Hôtel de Ville, once the place of execution, now, in Brice's time, devoted to shows and public exhibitions; while, "here the 'fires of Saint John are kindled,' on the eve of Midsummer day."

But in the time of Monsieur Brice a new Paris was coming into existence. Along the Rue Saint Denis handsome new mansions had been built by the Canons of Saint Germain Auxerrois, who let them to people of condition to good advantage. The Marais du Temple, formerly a marsh, then market-gardens, was being covered with fine new houses. The Temple itself still remained, surrounded by ancient walls flanked by towers, very much as it had been in the days of the Knights Templars. The Knights of Saint John held it still. Philip de Vendôme was grand master, and drew twenty thousand crowns a year from his benefice. The city gate, called the Temple, had just been pulled down, and a broadway had been made along the space lately occupied by the city wall and ditch. Already coaches might be driven from the Temple gate to the Porte Saint Antoine; the boulevards, in fact, had come into existence, but the name as yet was not. The road was still known as the rampart.

Another landmark of the period which still survives is the Place de Vendôme. The Hôtel de Vendôme was in course of demolition as well as the convent of the Capucines, to make room for a magnificent public place—the place which is in our days marked by the stately column that commemorates the victories of Napoleon.

A later manual, which offers itself as a guide for travellers of condition, to make a good use of time and money, is the "Séjour de Paris," of 1727, which gives advice to tourists in the following easy and pleasant fashion:

"You arrive at Paris, we will say, by ordinary chariot, or with post-horses. If by the chariot, there are certain auberges where these put up, and where chambers can be had; and if you have no friends in Paris, put up at the auberge, when, if you have made friends on the way with the head postillion, you will find everybody ready to serve you. If you come by post-horses, you must look out for an hostelry. The best of these are in the Faubourg of Saint Germain." And our author gives a list of them—the names familiar enough, and some of them subsisting, in one form or another, to the present day. Among these is the Hôtel de Treville, "where Mr. Prior had his apartments."

With time to look about him, the traveller should soon find suitable apartments. He must be careful in his dress, not to be singular, but to dress after the prevailing fashion. "The English do not willingly alter their mode when they come to Paris. They still wear their short 'juste au corps,' their little cravats, their little hats, and strangely-fashioned perruques, an equipage which distinguishes them from everybody else." It is delightful to meet with this little reproach, which everybody has repeated from generation to generation. Is the Englishman in fault, or is it the case of the dog with the bad name? One sees some extraordinary costumes among French provincials in Paris, but nobody thinks of sarcasm in their case.

But our traveller, comme il faut, will have provided himself with all that is necessary. He must have a laced coat à la mode, which will introduce him at Court, and at all the aristocratic assemblies. He must also have a simple coat of taffetas, or other silk stuff, for ordinary occasions, with a waistcoat of gold or silver cloth—modest and unconspicuous. A scarlet surtout is indispensable, and a black coat must be in reserve, in case of Court mourning. Go to a good tailor and perruquier, and don't spare a few crowns, adds our author, sententiously—

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a good perruque is the ornament of the noblest part of man.

A valet is indispensable, and easily to be had. He costs you a franc a day, for which he feeds and clothes himself. These gentry are generally faithful and honest, it is to their interest to be so, for justice treats them unceremoniously enough. The one who steals to-day, perhaps, is hanged to-morrow. You will dine at the public tables—the fare is much the same everywhere: a soup, a piece of boiled beef, a so-called entry of ragout, a fricassee of veal or cutlets, a few vegetables, the roast; and for dessert, milk-cheese, biscuits, and such fruits as are in season. And this from one year's end to another. But you will have good company, with plenty of mirth and laughter. At dessert you will be plagued enough by the importunates. Monks appeal to you who are collecting for their convent, and offer you a plate of salad as an inducement to open your purse. Then there are the flower-girls, and sellers—both male and female—of all kinds of toys and friandises—and the money that goes that way!

But the serious purpose of your journey must be attended to, and that is, no doubt, to perfect yourself in the accomplishments of a man of fashion. And you will have to work hard at that, if you mean to make full use of your opportunities. Here is your day sketched out: The French master comes at seven, and from eight to nine you practise your exercises, writing letters in French, the great use of the language. At nine the "mathematics" arrives, and after an hour with him you work at the problems he has set you till eleven. At that hour you are due at the Salle d'Armes, to practise your carte and tierce, and try your strength against the skilful swordsmen of the day. And then you may have an hour's relaxation in reading, before dinner. At one everybody dines, in the manner we have shown above. After dinner, you practise drawing for an hour; and at three you go to the dancing-class, where you will be put through your paces by a severe and exacting professor. After that, your time is your own, and you may enjoy yourself, with discretion, as you please.

Such was a visit to Paris in other days, and perhaps we have no great reason to regret the change that time has made. Yet, after all, wide as is the difference between the gay and glittering capital of to-day, and the Paris that, in material guise, has all but passed away, there is still a good deal in common between the two; and the germ of much that is now existing and flourishing may be found in the varied and often sombre memories of old Paris.

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

BY ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER VII.

The next day the lady of the house left her room and resumed her former insignificant position in the establishment. There was very little difference, if any, to be seen in her manner or appearance. Perhaps a little additional nervousness and a marked increase in her peculiar habit of trying to see over her shoulder without turning her head.

As for myself, I hardly knew what to do. Sometimes I felt as though I must relinquish my situation at any cost, for my nights grew worse instead of better, and body and mind seemed equally unhinged by the atmosphere of doubt and dread in which I was enveloped. But for the sake of the child, who, in spite of her mischievous ways and monkeyish tricks, had formed a real attachment towards me, and—well, perhaps, another reason, which I need not particularly mention, beyond the fact that it was not wholly unconnected with a member of the healing art—I should have thrown it up without a moment's delay and returned to the shabby little house at Highbury.

And this brings me down to the memorable Thursday, when Mrs. Wild was pronounced to be in her usual health, and her medical adviser paid his last visit. By-the-bye, I might mention that, though going by the unceremonious appellation of "old Dr. Green's assistant," the greater part of the practice was, in reality, in his hands—old Dr. Green being invalided by rheumatism and almost superannuated.

It was then, after he had taken a final leave, as it was supposed, of his patient, that he took me aside on some pretext, and, looking at me earnestly, said:

"You are no better."

I shook my head. There was no need for me to reply, as my haggard looks spoke for me plainly enough.

"I shall send you a sleeping-draught to-night," was his further remark. "Wait until the house is quiet and then take the entire dose."

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And with that he departed. The medicine made its appearance in due time —a not particularly prepossessing-looking mixture—and, at half-past ten, I retired with it to my room. It was no use attempting to take it yet. The doctor had emphatically said: "Wait until the house is quiet;" and I could still hear Mr. Wild taking his customary stealthy constitutional up and down the gravel carriage-track in front of the house. How I disliked and distrusted the man, and wondered what evil purpose he was planning as the faint squelch of his heel upon the gravel told me that he was out there perambulating the house in the darkness! Then I heard the solid tramp of Martha Horrocks, accompanied by her satellite—the dish and floor scrubber—as they sought the floor above. I heard the slam of the door, and then, for ten minutes or more, the sound of heavy footsteps overhead. Then all was quiet. Presently came the sound of the hall door being quietly closed, and a man's tread upon the stairs below.

Now was the proper time to take my medicine. It had a disagreeable taste; but I drained it to the dregs and lay down to wait for the sleep I so sorely needed. Whether I slept or not, I do not know; but in what seemed to me about the space of half an hour, I was seized with a sudden anxiety about Florence, who slept in a little room close to mine. There was nothing the matter with the child, in fact she had retired to rest in what was apparently the most uproarious health and spirits at her usual hour of eight, and had probably been fast asleep for hours. But somehow or other I felt that I must rise and ascertain with my own eyes that she was safe and well.

I knew it was foolish in the extreme; but after resisting the impulse for some moments, I gave way to it, and, lighting a candle and slipping on a dressing-gown and a pair of felt slippers, I stole softly across the passage which divided my room from hers. There was a night-light burning there, and, shading the light of my candle with my hand for fear it should wake her, I saw, with relief and satisfaction, that she was slumbering profoundly, with her mouth wide open.

She was not a pretty child under the most favourable circumstances; and now, as she slept the sleep of innocence, lying in a most unpicturesque attitude, with a halo of curl-papers surrounding her brow, she was not at her best. But I had a liking for my queer, precocious, troublesome little charge; and, setting down the candle, I proceeded to straighten the bed-clothes, and endeavour to make her more comfortable without awakening her. Then I sat down for a moment or two, and beginning to feel the effects of the draught I had taken coming over me, said to myself, "I must make haste back to bed before they pass off." But, instead of doing that, I must have fallen asleep where I was; for, when I awoke again suddenly with a shiver and start, my candle, which I had placed on the bureau, was burnt down to within half an inch of its socket, and the child was still asleep. And surely the potion must have affected my brain, for else, why, on leaving the room, did I, instead of turning my steps towards my own apartment, descend the staircase, until I found myself creeping along the passage belonging to the first-floor. I passed the closed doors of two or three rooms, being drawn on by some unknown influence to which I yielded myself without resistance, until I saw light streaming through a half-closed door at the end of the corridor, and heard the sound of a voice—the voice of Mrs. Wild—speaking in a tone which I scarcely recognised as hers. It was low, but at the same time penetrating and terrible. What was I doing there at that hour of the night? And why, why had I been brought from my room on the floor above by no will or intention of my own?

I blew out my candle, hardly knowing what I did, and crept nearer and nearer to that door through which the light streamed, until I brought its interior into focus. It was, as I knew, Mrs. Wild's dressing-room; and, as I shrank into the shadow formed by the angle of the wall, I saw her standing there — a small, white, eerie-looking figure — by the dressing-table, which was littered by the usual paraphernalia of the toilet. Opposite to her was her husband, dressed, with the exception of his coat, and with his pale, sinister eyes now open to their widest extent, and full of a fiendish lustre, as he fixed them upon her; while she gazed back at him with the terror of a dumb animal exposed to the remorseless and devilish influence of some member of the reptile world. But she was not dumb, for I had already heard her speak; and, as I cowered and listened, she began to speak again. And then I saw that she held something

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clutched tightly in one hand, which was partly hidden from me, but gleamed with a bluish gleam as the light glinted upon it. "I tell you I will not do it—no, you shall not make me." The words came low but distinct from between her white, strained lips. "I have escaped you twice, and shall again! You dare not kill me yourself, though you hate me and I am in your way; and so you try to make me destroy myself by the wicked power which you have over me; but I defy you——"

She broke off suddenly, and then I knew I must be dreaming. What I saw and heard could be no reality, but only a horrible, ghostly vision, conjured up by the power of the drug I had swallowed. If I could only wake!

The man answered not a word, but reared his head like a rattlesnake preparing to spring, and concentrated upon her the full power of his gaze, before which she paled and shrunk, but never turned aside her own; and I knew in my heart—though this was only a dream, and I should wake soon, trembling and bathed with perspiration—that he was willing her to do this thing by the strange power which he had over her, and to which she must, sooner or later, succumb. If she could but elude his glance for a second, the spell would be broken, and she would be saved. But as I looked the crisis came. Once more she spoke; but this time the words sounded far off, as one who talked in her sleep, uttering things of which she was unconscious.

"If I do this, it will leave you free to marry the other woman; and you will be able to squander upon her the money which belongs to me. You both hate me, and wish me dead; and to please you I must kill myself—to please you, for I do not want to die yet, miserable as I am!"

How much longer must the dream last? When should I be able to free myself from the paralysing power of the nightmare which hung over me? Already the woman's voice was growing fainter, and the vision that I saw flickered and danced before my eyes. But in the midst of the whirl and confusion which possessed my brain, I saw the man lift his arm for the first time, and make a gesture. The woman facing him gave a low, weird cry of horror and despair, and raised the hand, which all this time she had kept hidden, to her throat! There was a flash of steel; a groan; and a crimson stream spurted out and stained the whiteness of her garment.

After that darkness fell upon me, during which I seemed to be stumbling painfully through endless passages, and up and up countless flights of steep stairs, leading nowhere! Then, with an effort, I woke—woke, to find that I was in my own bed, in my own room, and, thank Heaven, that it was only a dream—only a dream. And then, turning on my side, I fell asleep again.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I next awoke it was in the cold, grey, wintry light of early morning. I woke with a sudden start—with the impression, too, that I had been suddenly roused from sleep by some outward agency; and as I listened it came again—a woman's sharp, shrill shriek of horror and dismay:

"Oh, my mistress!" I heard in a wild, agonised wail; and then I remembered my dream!

I rose, and huddled on my things, shaking the while, as with an ague, and then clinging to the hand-rail, made my way down the stairs to that first-floor, which had been the scene of my vision of the night before. At the foot of the stairs I was confronted by the frantic figure of Martha Horrocks.

"Go back," she cried, waving me from her, "go back, I say! It's no sight for the likes o' you!"

Her grizzled hair was streaming loose over her shoulders, and her face was ghastly to look upon.

"What is it?" I murmured, hoarsely, clinging to the banisters for support.

"What is it, you ask?" she echoed, her voice rising almost into a scream. "What is it but my mistress lying dead yonder—murdered—with her throat cut from ear to ear!"

And as those awful words struck upon my ear, I cried aloud, and fell headlong down the remaining stairs, and knew no more for many days.

When my senses came to me again, I was lying in a strange bed, in a strange room, and as I raised my head from the pillow I saw my mother sitting sewing in the window. How came she there, I wondered? And as I looked, she, too, raised her eyes, and seeing me gazing at her, came towards me. But when I would have spoken, and asked the meaning of all this, she laid her hand upon my lips, and implored me to keep silence. I had had brain-fever, and for three weeks had known

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no one, and only the most careful and devoted nursing and medical attention had carried me through. I had been removed from Woodburn Hall to lodgings in the village, and my mother had been telegraphed for to come and nurse me. When they at last allowed me to ask questions, I was told that, in consequence of the terrible event at the Hall, where Mrs. Wild had committed suicide, in, what was supposed to be, a fit of temporary insanity, the place had been shut up, and the husband of the deceased lady—who had been much overcome at her dreadful end—had gone abroad to seek distraction in change of scene.

Terrible images flitted across my brain as I thought of what I had seen and heard in my dream; but the most terrible thought of all was the one which persistently occurred to me from time to time, and seemed to tell me that what I had witnessed was no dream! I also heard another fact in connection with the tragedy, which caused me additional mental suffering, which was, that, at the inquest, Martha Horrocks, who had been called as a chief witness, had broken out into wild invective, and hurled the most hideous accusations against her master, who, she declared, was the cause of it all, and had made her mistress commit the act, "and could make anybody do anything he chose, if he set his mind to it!" But her words were looked upon as ravings, excusable only by reason of her devotion to her dead mistress—for had not the unfortunate lady been found with the razor, which was the instrument of the deed, so tightly clutched in her cold hand, that considerable force had been required to extricate it from her death grasp?

At last, after enduring an amount of mental torture which seriously retarded my recovery, I laid the whole matter before Dr. Howard, who was still in anxious attendance upon me. The gravity with which he received my communication deepened the impression already formed in my mind. But, after hearing me out, and considering deeply for some time, he replied that it was a matter beyond him—for, whether the sleeping-draught had excited my brain, so that what I saw, or thought I saw, was but a delirious vision, or whether, in a state of semi-somnambulism, I had really witnessed the awful scene I described, he could not tell; though he thought in all probability, and he also begged me to think so with him, that the former was the case, and the death of Mrs. Wild by her own hand, the same night, was only a terrible coincidence. So I tried to put the thing out of my mind and keep myself from dwelling upon the horrors which my imagination conjured up.

About a week after my convalescence, however, another link in the chain of mystery was forged by the agency of Martha Horrocks, who, before quitting the village and seeking her livelihood elsewhere, called to bid me farewell. She was much changed, and there was an air of suppressed fury about her, which made me endeavour, as far as possible, to keep the conversation from turning into the channel I dreaded. She told me, among other things, that Florence had been sent off, the day after the funeral, to a boarding-school at the sea-side.

Poor Florence! I was fond of the child; but the thought of her recalled other memories, and I put it aside!

But the most remarkable thing she said was, as I was bidding her good-bye, when she lowered her voice and, with a tightening of the lips and a look of sombre curiosity in her eyes, said:

"Did you ever hear as there was a candlestick found lying on the floor of the passage, just outside the dressing-room door, like the candlestick as used to stand on the mantelshelf in your bedroom? Whoever dropped it there knows more of that night's work than any one else living—except him!"

I have no more to say, except that there was one happy result from my brief and tragical sojourn at Woodburn Hall—the site of which has been sold, and the house pulled down to make room for the new railway—I have married old Dr. Green's assistant, who has taken over the whole of the practice, and now keeps an assistant on his own behalf.

I had almost forgotten to add that, three months after his wife's death by her own hand, we heard that Mr. Wild had married again, and some people, who have met them both abroad, and know their story, declare that there is the shadow of some dark secret brooding over them, and that the life of the second wife is even a more wretched and terror-stricken existence than was that of the first.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 44.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHANCE OF NEW WORK.

JESSE was too happy for thought; but without the help of thought or words he seemed lifted into a region of intense happiness. He had been given the best gift since his arrival at Rushwood—the power to worship beauty and goodness without in a perfectly unselfish manner. Once bring in man's self and you bring in man's pain. As yet the pain had not come.

The next day he took a walk with Symee along the valley of the Four Pools, and all the time he seemed to feel more than to think: "I may, perhaps, see her; she may be sitting on one of the bridges, or bending down near some little corner of the bank making the water happy by reflecting her."

All the thoughts of the true worshipper cannot be written, because the very channel of words seems to spoil them, like the bloom that is brushed off from the fruit which is picked by rough, careless hands. Words are not subtle enough for such feelings, unless a Dante may string them together.

But fact often triumphs over imagination, and, to-day, no Amice appeared in the valley. Still it was happiness for Jesse. Not getting what he wanted did not make him despise what he had; he was not used to many good times, and he knew how to appreciate what he got.

Another merry tea-party, this time joined by Mr. and Mrs. Deeprose, after which, like a schoolboy, Jesse begged if he might feed the chickens, some of whose pens were near the fir-wood a little way down.

Symee was tired, and stayed to help to wash up the tea-things. She was not used to this sort of work, and it pleased and amused her as something new; and, so doing, she bestowed many blessings on Amice as she rubbed the plates dry and watched Jesse going off whistling. He had been telling them about poor Milly Diggings, and Mrs. Deeprose said she would send her a hamper of good things when Jesse returned.

Now it happened, when Jesse had fed the chickens, and looked with intense pleasure at the merry multitude and their quaint ways of showing pleasure and anger, that, still whistling, he sauntered further on The red stems of the firs were catching the sunlight; the brown needles below appeared almost scarlet, and the patches of bracken by the side like sheets of gold flung carelessly down. Jesse looked and noted, as he had looked and noted in his childhood; the want of human sympathy had made him notice the world of Nature, and she had, therefore, revealed many secrets to him.

All at once his meditation was stopped by the sound of a tune whistled very sweetly and correctly, and the slash of a stick against the ferns. There, round the corner, came a boy with a letter-bag—the post-boy who brought the letters from the Beacon post-office and took away what there might be to go. Mr. Kestell paid for this honour, otherwise the inhabitants of this lonely district might have tramped up to the post-office at Rushbrook Beacon for their letters. The boy was a late institution, and knew not Jesse; but he soon

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thawed under Jesse's influence. A boy knows sooner than any one who means friendship to him, and he drew his letter forth with triumph.

"Be you Mister J. Vicary? Here's a letter for you."

Jesse took it and finished a country talk with the boy before he walked on, down a lane where the blackberries were luxuriously overtopping the hedge, and the big dewberries looked luxurious to town-tied Jesse. The lane ended at the foot of a small hill where the firs began again. Jesse made a bound on to the needle-strewn brown carpet, and opened his letter. He knew the handwriting; it was from Hoel Fenner.

It was a short letter, but it seemed to take a long time to read. Jesse sat and stared at it, and read it and re-read it, and then finally stood up against a tall, red-fir trunk.

Thus ran the letter:

"DEAR VICARY,—The editor of 'The Current Reader' was much pleased with your work. The whole paper was so business-like, and yet cleverly reported, that, if you really mean what you told me, I believe we can offer you a post at the office which may lead to something better. We want a man whom we can send where we like to take reports, and do all kinds of other literary work in spare time, which is above ordinary hack-work, and which will show if you could get further up the ladder.

"I think the best way will be for me to come down on Saturday till Monday to stay with my friend Mr. Heaton, and I will then speak myself to Mr. Kestell about the matter. I quite understand that you might find it a delicate matter to transact alone. Don't thank me; I was much impressed with the scenery at Rushbrook, and I want to see it again. The pay would at first be the same as what you are now receiving, but would be increased very soon if you were found to be the right man in the right place. Yours truly,

"HOEL FENNER."

No wonder Hoel put in "don't thank me," knowing all the time he should earn much gratitude, because in his heart he knew a letter would have been quite as useful as an interview. And the excuse about scenery was a cloak for quite other reasons; but then, such is human nature! Hoel had got a first-rate excuse for seeing Elva Kestell again, and he seized it, though even to himself he pretended—for no pretence is greater than that we carry on between our two natures—that it was really necessary he should go down and interview Mr. Kestell about this new proposal for his protégé.

Jesse stood some time rooted to the spot, with his back against the fir, and his heart swelling with thankfulness. Only now did he fully realise how burdensome had been his uncongenial work, how his whole being turned towards books, and literature, and literary work. It seemed to him that had his own well-being alone been in the question, he would long ago have thrown over the coals and begun at the lowest rung of the ladder which he had longed to climb. But then Symee had always been part of the question, and no uncertainty might be thought of for her sake. But now all was changed; there could be no pecuniary loss. On the contrary, there was a prospect of quickly increasing his income, and thereby a nearer prospect of being able to send for his sister. What added to the joy was his having received the news here in his own dearly-loved woods, with the autumn winds playing in the branches, as if they wished to add a rejoicing accompaniment to his thoughts.

If Jesse had been told he had inherited a large fortune, he would not have felt half the joy that the prospect of this work gave him.

After a time his thoughts turned to his friends in Golden Sparrow Street. It seemed almost hard that this good thing should have come to him, and that he could not share it with his poorer friends; for Jesse had a nature which joy has the effect of making more tender to others. The impulse of the best childhood, to share everything with those present, had never left him.

It was at this moment of intense joy that Jesse, looking up, saw the well-known form of Mr. Kestell slowly coming down the hill. It was some moments before the young man moved; and during these moments he watched with deep reverence the man who had helped him to reach the pinnacle of joy he now stood upon. How often he had seen in his mind's eye the venerable head with its handsome features, its benevolent eyes, its grey hair just touching the coat-collar! All was photographed on Jesse's brain, even to the thin, nervous hands, and the cut of his coat just a little antiquated, but in perfect harmony with the whole man.

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"He is coming to see me," thought Jesse. So, reluctantly leaving his fir-tree, he walked quickly down through the fir-needles, and stepping over a ditch at the bottom, found himself close to Mr. Kestell.

It so happened that Mr. Kestell had been deep in thought, and not thinking of finding Jesse here, started visibly as the young man suddenly stood beside him.

"I saw you coming, sir," said Jesse, by way of apology for startling him, "and I thought if you were coming to see me, I might save you the rest of the walk."

Mr. Kestell held out his hand, and Jesse took it, remembering more that he was Amice's father than his own benefactor. It was a new glory to add to many others which, in Jesse's mind, crowned the grey hairs with an ever-bright aureole.

"Thank you. I did not expect you here, Vicary, but I am very glad to see you. I was coming to the farm; but now you are here, I need go no further. If it falls in with your plans, I shall be glad if you will walk back to Rushbrook with me."

Jesse turned round with an exclamation of pleasure.

"I should like it above all things, sir. This road seems to me more beautiful every time I see it. I must thank you very much for allowing my sister to come to the Home Farm; it is a pleasure which I had not expected."

Jesse spoke so simply and so heartily that it was, or would have been to most people, a pleasure to hear him. There was not the least cringing in his tone, but rather a deep respect, which, given freely, is an honour to any man to give or to receive.

"And you are quite comfortable at the farm? The Deeproses are good and kind people."

As he spoke, Mr. Kestell glanced at Jesse, though without looking him full in the face.

"Yes; they are not, of course, the same as my old friends; but one cannot expect that. Mrs. Norton is still alive, I hear, at Greystone."

"Yes, I give her a little pension; but she is getting very old now; I doubt if she will live to enjoy it much longer. She does not care to see people now."

"I'm sorry for that; I should have liked to have talked over old times."

There was a little silence, then Mr. Kestell said:

"And you are quite settled with Card and Lilley? It is a very solid firm; no fear of any disaster with them in the commercial line. I am extremely glad they were able to give you the post you occupy now. But, anyhow, they would have given you good recommendations to another firm. You have always been steady and attentive."

Mr. Kestell seemed to be repeating his thoughts more than saying something that required any answer; and Jesse, feeling he must wait now for Mr. Fenner's arrival, said nothing, though he felt somewhat guilty at the next remark.

"You will see, Vicary—or I do not doubt that you have already done so—that in business it is of the greatest importance for a young man to have testimonials of long service in the same house. A few more years of this same kind of work, and you will be sure to get employment somewhere, even if Card and Lilley were to fail. I think I may say your future is assured; and this thought is a great comfort to me."

"Thank you, sir," said Jesse, quietly; he was beginning to feel uneasy as to what Mr. Kestell might say of his change of employment.

There was another pause, and Jesse was wishing he might speak out openly, for concealment was very foreign to him; so, plunging into a subject which was nearly related to the one he must not yet mention, he said:

"I was wishing to tell you, sir, that I ought to say——"

Mr. Kestell stopped short, and looked quickly at Jesse.

"What is it?" he said, very gently.

"That my greatest wish is some day to make a home for my sister. I have been trying to find a little extra work in order——"

Mr. Kestell and Vicary had now reached the road by the Pools. There had been a little clearing made close by the water, so as to allow a view across. This evening it reflected the crimson clouds so that one little corner looked like blood. Above, the silvery birches bent towards the Pool, as if ready to plunge into the bosom of the life-giving water. A few reeds, with brown, withered tips, stood up stiff and straight, while the arrow-head at their base swayed slightly in the ripple.

If Mr. Kestell noticed any of these sights before interrupting, it must have been the crimson water, which was for a few moments very striking; but Jesse looked at this and more, because, as a boy,

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he had often stood here and watched each smile, each movement on the face of Nature.

"I do not advise you, Vicary, to entertain this thought; Symee is perfectly happy and contented at Rushbrook. I even questioned her on this very subject a little while ago. You would only take her to a very pinched state of existence, which she has not been accustomed to——"

"Symee is very brave, and we are twins; we have no other ties. I believe you once told me, sir, that when my grandmother died, I had no other relation who could take me in; in fact, that there were none to take pity on such poor specimens of mortality."

Vicary spoke a little lightly to hide his real feeling.

"None that I could find; otherwise, of course, I should not have taken you out of——" Mr. Kestell hesitated, "out of their care."

Jesse had grown up with the knowledge that Mr. Kestell had befriended him; it did not enter his head to ask why he had thus acted.

Whether Jessie might now have revealed Mr. Fenner's offer, to show cause why Symee should leave Rushbrook, had an interruption not occurred at this moment, must remain doubtful; but, just as they were passing the Pool, Mr. Guthrie suddenly appeared, and put an end to further talk.

With his usual kind geniality, George Guthrie greeted Jesse warmly. If he were a Conservative, and of a good old English family, he certainly prided himself more on his warm heart than on his birth. He never made any one feel that they were beneath him.

"Why, Vicary; you here? Very glad to see you; I'm particularly glad to know you are alive and well, because I've been hearing your praises sung so much lately. I began to fancy you must be a myth. It's a very bad omen when all men speak well of one, I believe, though as I've never experienced this universal approbation, I shouldn't know what to do with it, eh, Mr. Kestell? Now, if I could have earned your good character, I should do my best to keep it up; but I was called an idle vagabond so early in life, that I grew into my character with the same ease as a mongrel puppy becomes a mongrel dog. I've been the patient peg to hang my bad name upon so long, that now I should be sorry to lose it. When I take to literature, I shall write an essay on character, and prove entirely that it's made for us, and that it's humbug to say we make it for ourselves."

Jesse felt at his ease at once; somehow, Mr. Kestell had had the opposite effect upon him.

"Indeed, Mr. Guthrie, I'm only too glad to come back to Rushbrook, whatever my reputation may be. But if you got it from Mr. Fenner, I fear it's worth little. He's been very kind to me, that's all."

"No, he was not my informant; but never mind. You see that one's secret sins and virtues are found out without our knowing in this small world. I assure you, that is the only motive that prevents me doing all kinds of wickedness. I say, if I could do this, and no one know, I would; but there's the rub. Actions seem to me to be always accompanied by the cranes of Ibicus."

"I must be going in," said Mr. Kestell, quickly. "I shall see you again, Vicary, before you go. Guthrie, won't you come in and see the ladies?"

"Well, yes, I will; I hear Amice singing, and she would draw me anywhere, when she does that; but she's like a mermaid—can't often be caught combing her hair and singing her unearthly songs. Good evening, Vicary; I shall come and call on you at the farm, and we'll have a good talk."

They were near the front gate, and the two gentlemen went in. Whilst Jesse pretended to cross the bridge, as if he were going for a walk; but very soon he returned and listened. He was but a poor man's son, he might not go within the sacred precinct that contained her; but no one could prevent him listening. As he listened, Jesse Vicary's soul seemed filled with great thoughts of the future. Could not a man climb the ladder of fame till, whatever his birth, men would be proud to know him, and women would admire him for himself? There was no bitterness about the present in this thought—only a great hope for the future. Some day Amice Kestell might be proud to have known him.

SIGHT-SEEING AS A CAREER.

AMONG other habits of dubious merit which the present century has set hard and fast upon us, that of systematic sight-seeing

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may well be gibbeted. Of course, there is no harm in the indulgence of this habit up to a certain point. On the contrary, it is, in its way, a method of education nearly as effectual, and, in the beginning, quite as pleasant as the common walks of schoolmasters, grammars, and dull object-lessons. But, by-and-by, when the habit has become almost ineradicable, and holds the victim as tight as a diabolical incubus, there is nothing for it but to groan, and wish civilisation were other than it is.

We complain in the newspapers about the iniquity of the process of cramming, to which it seems needful to apprentice those of our children who cannot be said to possess more than an average share of wits. The boys are day by day made to swallow a multitude of nauseous pills, gilded with the coating of expediency. They do not like it; but they are intelligent enough to agree with their sire or their tutor that the end may justify the means. And when the end is really attained, they are free to rejoice, disburden their brains of the many uncomfortable facts they have put upon them, and laugh through the rest of their days. The "crammer" of their youth is, thenceforward, little more to them than a bad dream dreamed a month ago.

Now the man who is inoculated with the malady of sight-seeing is not privileged to escape, like the boy, from the bonds which distress him. Only when he is a tottering septuagenarian may he hope to be saved. And even then it is doubtful. For there are so many modern appliances for the lessening or suffocation of the pains of fatigue, that it is always possible that he may end his days abruptly in the thrall of his old pastime, either amid the cushions of a Bath-chair, or leaning on the pretentious arms of a patent electric crutch warranted to galvanise the aged into a state of juvenile activity.

It were shameful presumption, and, moreover, absurd to cast stones at the inveterate sight-seer, if there were any sterling results to show for the labours to which his life is consecrated. But, in truth, his toils are as profitless as were those of Tantalus. They are, therefore, positively vicious; for there is no half-way house in matters of this kind. He is divorced from all those most excellent influences which work upon the man who elects to spend his days at home, content with the sphere he can embrace with his own arms. Wife and children he must not think of; or if he does view matrimony, it is at a distance, and in opposition to the habit which will by no means submit to the chains sure to be set upon it by a prudent spouse. The respect and affection of his fellow-men he is as remote from all chance of securing as from the sober joys which wait upon a judicious marriage. How can his friends and acquaintances estimate a man who, if he is with them to-day, is likely to be on the Pyramids to-morrow, and next week exchanging bows with a Polar bear in Spitzbergen? He is not on a common plane with them, be their inclination towards him ever so strong. Though they strive to treat him as a familiar, his manner of life is an irresistible bar to the warm addresses of familiarity. He is, also, by his erratic courses, out of the way of those most educational abstractions—responsibilities. Not for him is the proud seat of the Councillor, whether of town or county, or whether acting as a State representative at Westminster. The least sapient of greengrocers would laugh to scorn the idea of giving his vote for such a man to become one of the municipal magnates. He may have much uncommon information about several continents at his fingers' ends, as the phrase goes; but the greengrocer cares nothing about that.

"What I want, and what the town wants," protests the tradesman, with much truth, "is a gentleman that stays and looks after his own home, and can always be found when he's wanted. Foreign lands are for foreign folk, I think, just as the stars have their people, and the earth has hers. With taxes seven-and-six in the pound, the man who wants to sit in the Council must sit there and do his best to bring them down to five shillings, and not be going away to Spain with his letters of apology, coming back only in time to say: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to offer myself to you for re-election, and I need not say that I have your interests as near my heart as my own.' It isn't natural, and it's bad for the town."

The greengrocer is, in fact, likely to be the wiser man of the two. The plea that one travels for knowledge is not applicable to the systematic sight-seer. He has got beyond that stage. It may even be averred that he journeys to escape the claims of knowledge and mellow experience. Opportunities of acquiring knowledge shower upon him as upon no other man; but his intelligence is like a duck's back: it shakes

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itself free from the showers as fast as they rain upon him. He sees all things, and reflects upon nothing. Though he travels among peoples of all kinds and colours, he carries his old prejudices with him wherever he goes. With him a Frenchman is, to the last, a Frenchman, and a Chinaman a Chinaman. He never comes to regard Frenchmen and Chinese, Hindoos and Greenlanders alike as human beings, not so very dissimilar, at bottom, to himself. The habits of a foreigner are, to the last, repugnant to him, because they differ from his own habits.

The Faroese islanders have a wise little proverb which says that "the man who lives always at home knows how to behave in the world." I believe Socrates once said something akin to this. If he did not, the forefathers of Faroe have the more credit for the strength of their intelligence. Be this as it may, the proverb could have no better confirmation than in the man who is the subject of this paper.

But I hear it protested: surely you do not imply that the more a man sees of the world, the less he becomes fitted to conduct himself decorously among the people of the world?

No, indeed. With most men, the spirit of cosmopolitanism would be strong for good. At least it would befit them for easy behaviour in dilemmas which would puzzle the man who never leaves his native land. But the mere sight-seer is a man apart. Though he hardly realises it, he resembles the dove which Noah let out of the ark, and which wandered to and fro over the unyielding waters, seeking in vain a congenial resting-place. And, in truth, to our friend, the world with all its manifold spectacles, is hardly more varied in its power of entertainment than if it were like that world of waters which certainly disquieted the dove, and probably also seemed to it a little monotonous.

Wisdom is best picked up at home. It is then admirably available for use abroad in the world.

On the other hand, the man who, without very discreet self-discipline, goes abroad in the world, here, there, and everywhere, is sure to find himself at home nowhere; and probably nowhere less at his ease than in the fond old nest which has taken such tender shapes during the few moments of affectionate reflection which he has consented to allot to himself.

Others, as well as a literary man so profoundly subjective as Gustave Flaubert, have every reason to confess that, "to take pleasure in a place, it is necessary to have lived there a long time."

The professional sight-seer is thus debarred, intrinsically, from the very gratifications which the uninitiated of, for example, his native village, make no doubt he is enjoying to the fullest and most enviable extent.

Again, in no respect is our unhappy friend more to be pitied by the rest of us who stay at home than in the extinction of his faculty of imagination. Do but think for a moment of his sad condition. The majority of us are so fortunate as not to be able to see a tithe of those wonders of the world about which we have dreamed from the days of our infancy. Even when we are old men and old women, we are as eager and enthusiastic on this subject as ever we are. We may then flatter ourselves that we know all about human nature, and that we are to be surprised by no event, howsoever preposterous or unexpected. Thus far we are fully disillusioned. But our experience of the inanimate works of nature, and the heroic or laborious achievements of mankind in divers ages, is so limited, that it may be termed quite infantine. The traveller, whether sight-seer or man of science, is still a personage to whom we look for solace in the dull, final days of our pilgrimage.

But the sight-seer himself has none of this satisfaction which, it is supposed, he has it in his power to bestow upon his fellow-men. He has glutted his eyes with the world's glories. His heart has chilled to ice during his long, intolerable pilgrimages. When you talk to him of the divine charms of a sunset, he smiles you to silence. Has he not seen sunrises and sunsets from mountains and plains, in every continent? "My dear sir," he may say, in the frigid tone that stems the flow of warm, hearty, and healthful animal spirits, "take my word for it, one sunrise is much like another!"

It is the same with everything else. He could no more delight himself with the mental picture of a snowy Alp high against the blue, than the valetudinarian with one foot in the grave could find pleasure in a Lord Mayor's banquet. He is incapable of appreciating what is good in Art, except by that wearisome standard of comparison unguided by insight. Both Nature and Art are to him little better than a cheerless prison-yard, which he is doomed to perambulate until he is called elsewhere.

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Of course, the man in such a case—unanchored, without the restraint and beneficial discipline of wholesome responsibilities, and soon prone to regard the world merely as a picture-gallery which the Creator has opened for his diversion—is likely to develope briskly into an egotist of the first water. It could not be otherwise. He is the centre of the solar system. Sun, moon, and stars are provided directly for his use. He resents, as a freak of atmospheric impertinence, the intervention of a cloud when, for instance, he goes to see the Colosseum by moonlight. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other similar disastrous phenomena of Nature, interest him as spectacles only. He is not prone to sympathise deeply with the sufferings of the wretched beings who have been overwhelmed by such displacements of the earth's surface. If it rested with him to determine whether this or that catastrophe should or should not be attended with loss of life, I fear he would vote unscrupulously for the loss of life. In short, though it may seem little less than amazing exaggeration to say so, he is a civilised monster. The ghoul or cannibal of savagedom is not exactly an amiable being; but I think he appeals more to the sympathies than the established man of the world as sight-seer, whose heart's blood is, by his own deliberate course of life, dried within him.

Did he but know its consequences, our friend would assuredly have preferred a spell of years at the treadmill to the life he has chosen to lead. For my part, indeed, I think the criminal, who is not lost to shame, has some very fine opportunities of sober happiness during the dull round of his prison life. The world is shut off from him. He has little chance of being reunited with it for some months or years. This separation from it soon hallows it in his memory. He comes to regard it as one is apt to think of a dead relation or friend. The relation, or friend, is sure to have had a few faults when he was alive; but now that he is no longer with us, we are oblivious of his defects, and mindful only of his virtues, which we magnify. And so also the criminal finds his affections daily stronger and stronger towards the world from which he is temporarily severed. The world may have treated him very scurvily when he was in the midst of it. Its treatment of him may indeed have been so cruel, that this, and nothing else, impelled him to commit the crime for which he is incarcerated. Yet all this is forgotten. He remembers only its many graces: the charm of free breath in the open; the glint of unstinted sunshine; the voices of men and women, loud and unrestrained; the luxury of a good meal; the smiles in the eyes and on the lips of those whom he loves. He longs for the day when he shall be set outside his prison walls as, perhaps, heretofore, he has longed for nothing.

Not so the sight-seer in the thrall of his passion. He is comparable to the despot whose every wish is fulfilled, and who eventually, therefore, finds life so futile and joyless, that he despises it. Hence, like the despot of old, he is soon sure to be at the mercy of his evil passions. His system demands strong entertainment, or none at all.

But, it may be asked, is not this, after all, only a fancy portraiture? Surely we do not, in actual life, meet with men so perverted in disposition as this man? and by such means?

No; it is not merely a fancy portraiture. It is representative of a type that abounds. The colours may be strongly marked; that is all.

Of course a man does not carry his character on his sleeve, so that all who pass may read it. You would not think that the mild-faced person next to you in the compartment of a railway carriage was a murderer; and yet he might be. The science of thought-reading must become general, and an inherited instinct, ere we are able to form true conceptions of our neighbours. And it will then prove to be such an insufferable accomplishment that all civilisation will probably combine to banish its professors to Tristan d'Acunha, or some equally remote place, where their noxious influence may not be exercised.

Thus the man of the world, with no stationary interest, is, to the eye, and, possibly, to the convictions, very far indeed from being an objectionable person. He has his moods of amiability, like every one else. At such times he can stimulate the imagination of other people in the liveliest and most delightful manner. The statue of the Laocöon may be more communicative to you than it is to him; but he has seen it with his own eyes, whereas you have only read about it.

If, however, you bother him with questions about his theory of the interpretation of this statue, he will soon leave you to yourself. He really does not care two straws whether the old

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priest is in the last agony precedent to death; whether he is making the empyrean echo with his screams of pain; or, whether the suffering of his face is due to his effort to suppress, as unmanly, the wails he is impelled of nature to utter. Ask him if he knows that the frog's legs he eats at Bignon's were snipped from the living frog, and he will shrug his shoulders with the like indifference. The Laocöon is what you please to make of it; the frog's legs are good. What more need be said? And so, if you would profit by his better moments, and the talent that is in him, you must allow our friend to be just what he is, and expect nothing more than he offers to you. He is like a variegated mosaic: agreeable enough as a work of art—the designs, coloured materials, and operatives for which may have come fom afar—but not to be disturbed. If you dig up the mosaic, you destroy all. There is nothing but clods underneath.

It is when he is no longer young, when, indeed, he begins to grow old, that the professional sight-seer realises to the full that he has not done his duty to himself. What an active past he has lived, to be sure! Yet what has he to show for it?

Other men with whom he started in life on an equality, or even with points in his favour, are now in every way his betters. An hour's conversation with one of them humbles him to the dust. He has been sipping the honey; they have done the work. They have gained knowledge by actual intercourse with the world; strength by battling with it; wisdom through their double experience of the world's warfare and the world's ways. But he has spent his years skimming over the world's surface, indulging his curiosity. He is really no wiser than when he began his singular career; and he has attained the age when wisdom is to man what beauty is, in her prime, to woman. His rank among men is very low. His friends are astonished to find that it is so. He himself is appalled, enraged, humiliated to the core.

Nor is this the worst. He has spent his best years journeying for his amusement, so that he has never thought of matriculating in that school of self-sacrifice whence it is well to pass forth with honours. He has feared to give hostages to fortune in the guise of wife and children, lest his own pleasure should be imperilled. Fortune, now that she begins to tire of indulging him, has no inducement to withhold her hand from vexing him. On the contrary, she acknowledges that it is his due; and if he has not thought of conciliating her on behalf of his later years, it is his affair, not hers: she cannot always favour him. I dare say, had our friend seen his own welfare more clearly, he would at the outset have rejected the career which he adopted. He would have chosen rather to practise self-sacrifice "as the last refinement of a judicious luxury." But it is now somewhat late in the day. He is keenly indisposed to face the trials with which matrimony is sure to confront him, much as he would like to be allied to a good and gentle woman, whose sole aim in life would be the advancement of his own happiness, and the warding off of the various arrows of discomfort which wing through the air to harass mankind. Nor has he very much that is acceptable to offer, on his own behalf, to the virtuous and gentle woman whom he would like to call his wife. The time is past. He has enjoyed by himself. He must now suffer by himself. He will do his best to avoid suffering—that may well be assumed—but he cannot escape the common lot. There is nothing that is enviable in the second half of his life, however much or little in the earlier half.

Our hapless friend in his old age—if he does nothing better—offers us, for our service, a very fine, though somewhat ancient moral. Here, as in other kindred tracks through life, a man, in effect, wrongs himself by following the path which he thinks promises to be merely the most agreeable. He pursues pleasure, and, when he has caught the butterfly, he crushes it in his hand. It is thus the old story. Had he not gone in such peremptory quest of happiness, he might have chanced to meet with happiness.

A LOYAL LADY.

In those dark days of English history when King strove with Parliament—the "divine right" of the anointed sovereign with the just liberties of the subject—there were not wanting on either side noble instances of loyal heroism and steadfast self-devotion.

Lord Falkland, Sir John Elliot, Montrose, died on the battle-field, in prison, on the scaffold, for that which each deemed the right. These men, and many others like them, were the heroes of their time;

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the same spirit animated them, though they met, sword in hand, to fight for opposed principles, rival interests. Each of these men did, or tried to do, his duty in the cruel confusion of the Civil Wars, and, whether he died for King or Parliament, he died nobly, and as a faithful soldier should; and his loyalty and devotion lit up the sombre annals of those troubled times with a glorious radiance which still shines through the pages of history.

England had her heroines, too, in those days of danger and privation: such devoted women as Mrs. Hutchinson and the eccentric Duchess of Newcastle. True, their "heroic actions" were not "performed publicly in the field," as the Duchess puts it, "but privately in the closet." Theirs was the womanly devotion of wifely love, the loyal courage of domestic self-sacrifice.

Such a heroine was Lady Anne Fanshawe, who, all unconsciously, has sketched her own character in her charmingly frank and unaffected "Autobiography." "It is a character," to quote Mr. Davenport Adams, "which one cannot but respect and admire. A tender and loving disposition was combined with a courageous heart; and her whole life, which was darkened at one time by many dangers and privations, was informed by a spirit of the truest and tenderest piety."

Anne Harrison, the eldest daughter of Sir John Harrison, of Balls, in the county of Herts, was born in St. Olave's, Hart Street, London, on the twenty-fifth of March, 1625; and there she passed the first fifteen winters of her life, until her mother's death in 1640. Her education had been wisely and carefully directed by this excellent lady, and all the advantages "that time afforded" were placed within her reach. Thanks to her mother's training, our heroine might well say with Portia:

> Happier than this,
> She is not bred so dull but she can learn.

But Anne had an active nature, and loved riding and running. "In short," she says, "I was that which we grown people call a hoyting girl; but, to be just to myself, I never did mischief to myself or people, nor one immodest word or action in my life." With her mother's death came the consciousness of greater responsibility, and the "hoyting girl" began to reflect, and flung away "those little childnesses which had formerly possessed her, and took charge of her father's house and family, which she ordered to his entire satisfaction."

But troubled times were at hand. Her father espoused the Royal cause, and followed the Court to Oxford. Thither he summoned his daughters, for—with London in the hands of the Puritans—he did not think it safe for them to remain where they were. His estate had been sequestered by the Parliament, and they were reduced to great poverty: "living in a baker's house in an obscure street, and sleeping in a bad bed in a garret, with bad provisions, no money, and little clothes."

Such were the straits to which their devoted loyalty reduced the faithful followers of the King.

"We had the perpetual discourse," she says, "of losing and gaining towns and men; at the windows, the sad spectacle of war; sometimes plague, sometimes sicknesses of other kind, by reason of so many people being packed together, as, I believe, there never was before, of that quality; always in want, yet I must needs say, that most bore it with a martyr-like cheerfulness. For my own part, I began to think we should all, like Abraham, live in tents all the days of our lives."

On the 18th of May, 1644, Anne was married to Mr. Richard Fanshawe, a cultivated gentleman, and loyal Cavalier, she being then in her twentieth year, while her husband was about thirty-six. He had been appointed Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales, with a promise from the King that he should be preferred as soon as an opportunity offered; but "both his fortune," to quote his wife, "and my promised portion—which was made ten thousand pounds—were both at that time in expectation; and we might truly be called merchant adventurers, for the stock we set up our trading with did not amount to twenty pounds betwixt us. But, however, it was to us as a little piece of armour is against a bullet, which, if it be right placed, though no bigger than a shilling, serves as well as a whole suit of armour. So our stock bought pen, ink, and paper, which was your father's trade; and by it, I assure you, we lived better than those that were born to two thousand pounds a year, as long as he had his liberty."

Early in the following March, Mr. Fanshawe attended the Prince to Bristol. The circumstances under which he left his wife rendered this first separation peculiarly painful to them both:

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"It was the first time we had parted a day since we married," she says, with pathetic simplicity. "He was extremely afflicted, even to tears, though passion was against his nature; but the sense of leaving me with a dying child—which did die two days after—in a garrison town, extremely weak, and very poor, were such circumstances as he could not bear with, only the argument of necessity. And, for my own part, it cost me so dear, that I was ten weeks before I could go alone. But he, by all opportunities, wrote to me to fortify myself; and that as soon as the Lords of the Council had their wives come to them, I should come to him; and that I should receive the first money he got, and hoped it would be suddenly. By the help of God, with these cordials, I recovered my former strength by little and little; nor did I, in my distressed condition, lack the conversation of many of my relations then in Oxford, and kindnesses of very many of the nobility and gentry."

Mrs. Fanshawe rejoined her husband in May, and in April, 1646, they accompanied the Prince to the Scilly Islands. Here the devoted pair endured hardships and sufferings that far surpassed any they had undergone at Oxford. The accommodation was wretched, and there were but three beds in the house which they occupied. The house itself consisted of two low rooms, and two little lofts, to which the sole access was by a ladder. One of these lofts —where the owner of the house kept the dried fish, in which he dealt—became the sleeping-quarters of Mr. Fanshawe's two clerks; while the other was occupied by "the rest of the servants." Of the two rooms, one was allotted to Mrs. Fanshawe's sister.

But, miserable as this lodging appeared, it had yet other drawbacks; for the first night our heroine slept there she felt intolerably cold, and discovered next morning that her bed "was near swimming with the sea." This, however, the owner reassuringly informed her, "it never did but at spring-tide." Moreover, they were practically destitute of all the necessaries of life, having neither clothes, meat, nor fuel; and, to quote Mr. Davenport Adams, "May be said to have begged their daily bread of God, for they thought every meal their last." Well may he add: "The loyalty which, without murmur, endured these privations, must, after all, have been something more than a sentiment; it may be said almost to have assumed the proportions of a religion."

After various wanderings, Mr. Fanshawe's employment in the Prince's service ceased; and his wife came to England, where she succeeded in obtaining permission for her husband to compound for his estates in the sum of three hundred pounds, and also to return. Thus it fell to his lot to wait frequently upon the King during his detention at Hampton Court, where Mrs. Fanshawe also went three times to pay her duty to the captive monarch. "The last time I ever saw him," she says, "when I took my leave, I could not refrain weeping. When he had saluted me, I prayed to God to preserve His Majesty with long life and happy years. He stroked me on the cheek and said: 'Child, if God pleaseth, it shall be so; but both you and I must submit to God's will, and you know what hands I am in.' Then, turning to Mr. Fanshawe, he said: 'Be sure, Dick, to tell my son all that I have said, and deliver those letters to my wife; pray God bless her! I hope I shall do well.' And taking him in his arms, said: 'Thou hast ever been an honest man, and I hope God will bless thee, and make thee a happy servant to my son, whom I have charged in my letter to continue his love and trust to you,' adding, 'I do promise you that, if ever I am restored to my dignity, I will bountifully reward you both for your service and sufferings.' Thus did we part from that glorious man, that within a few months after was murdered, to the grief of all Christians that were not forsaken by God."

In the following October, on the day before their embarkation from Portsmouth, the Fanshawes had a narrow escape. They were walking by the seaside, when two Dutch men-of-war shot bullets at them so near that they heard them whistle past. On this Mrs. Fanshawe called to her husband to make haste back, and very prudently began to run; but he never altered his pace, merely remarking, calmly: "If we must be killed, it were as good to be killed walking as running." Some time later, they passed six weeks in Paris, where they received much gratifying notice from Queen Henrietta Maria and the loyal and noble exiles who formed her suite. At Calais, the Governor feasted them very hospitably, and much excellent discourse passed—the largest share of the talking being done by Sir Kenelm Digby, who indulged in extraordinary narratives, to the mingled astonishment and admiration of the

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French company at table. "The concluding one was that barnacles, a bird in Jersey, was first a shell-fish to appearance, and from that, sticking upon old wood, became in time a bird. After some consideration, they unanimously burst out into laughter, believing it altogether false; and, to say the truth," adds Mrs. Fanshawe, with delicious ignorance, "it was the only thing true he had discoursed with them."

After our heroine had again ventured to England, in the hope of raising money for her sorely-pressed family, she and her children rejoined Mr. Fanshawe in Ireland, where, for six months, the wanderers enjoyed a well-earned repose, which must have been welcome indeed to the wife—not yet twenty-five years of age — who in her short married life had passed through so many terrible experiences, and borne so much suffering with such quiet courage and heroic endurance.

The respite was of brief duration. Cromwell landed in Ireland, and crushed the unhappy country with an iron hand. Cork declared for the Commonwealth in November, 1649. Mr. Fanshawe was away at Kinsale, and his wife, who was lying ill in bed with a broken wrist, had to face this unexpected danger alone.

"At midnight," she says, "I heard the great guns go off, and thereupon I called up my family to rise, which I did as well as I could in that condition. Hearing lamentable shrieks of men, women, and children, I asked at a window the cause. They told me they were all Irish, stripped and wounded, and turned out of the town; and that Colonel Jeffries, with some others, had possessed themselves of the town for Cromwell. Upon this I immediately wrote a letter to my husband .... persuading him to patience and hope that I should get safely out of the town .... and desired him to shift for himself .... with the promise that I would secure his papers.

"So soon as I had finished my letter I sent it by a faithful servant, who was let down the garden wall of Red Abbey, and, sheltered by the darkness of the night, he made his escape."

Mrs. Fanshawe next packed her husband's papers, money, and other things of value:

"And then, about three o'clock in the morning, by the light of a taper, and in that pain I was in, I went into the market-place with only a man and maid, and, passing through an unruly tumult, with their swords in their hands, searched for their chief commander, Jeffries. . . . He instantly wrote me a pass .... and said he would never forget the respect he owed Mr. Fanshawe. With this I came through thousands of naked swords to Red Abbey, and hired the next neighbour's cart, which carried all that I could remove; and myself, sister, and little girl, Nan, with three maids and two men, set forth at five o'clock, in November, having but two horses amongst us all, which we rid on by turns .... but by little and little, I thank God, we got safe to the garrison, where I found your father."

In February, 1650, Mr. Fanshawe and his wife embarked on board a Dutch ship for Malaga. But a Turkish galley bearing down on the ship, the captain called for arms, and cleared the deck, resolving to fight.

"This," as Mrs. Fanshawe says, "was sad for us passengers; but my husband bid us women be sure to keep in the cabin, and not appear, which would make the Turks think that we were a man-of-war; but if they saw women, they would take us for merchants and board us. He went upon the deck, and took a gun and bandoliers and sword, and, with the rest of the ship's company, stood upon deck expecting the arrival of the Turkish man-of-war. This beast, the captain, had locked me up in the cabin. I knocked and called long to no purpose, until, at length, the cabin-boy came and opened the door. I, all in tears, desired him to be as good as to give me his blue and brown cap he wore, and his tarred coat, which he did, and I gave him half-a-crown; and putting them on, and flinging away my night-clothes, I crept up softly and stood upon deck by my husband's side, as free from sickness and fear as, I confess, from discretion; but it was the effect of that passion which I could never master.

"By this time the two vessels were engaged in parley, and so well-satisfied with speech and sight of each other's forces, that the Turk's man-of-war tacked about, and we continued our course. But when your father saw it convenient to retreat, looking upon me, he blessed himself, and snatched me up in his arms, saying, 'Good God! that love can make this change!' And though he seemingly chid me, he would laugh at it as often as he remembered that voyage."

Again was this noble wife's devotion to

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be shown under circumstances that read more like a chapter out of some romance, than a page of sober history: Sir Richard Fanshawe — created a Baronet for his services in Spain—was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, and conveyed to London. For ten weeks he was closely confined in Whitehall, in constant expectation of death. At four, every morning, his wife made her way from her lodging in Chancery Lane to his prison. She came alone, and on foot, a dark lantern in her hands. Standing beneath his window, she called him softly; and he, answering, would put his head out, and hold sweet converse with her, directing her how to intercede for his life and liberty with Cromwell. These efforts were at last successful, and Sir Richard was released on bail; when he and his family enjoyed some years of well-earned rest.

On the happy restoration of their exiled monarch, Sir Richard again took part in public affairs; and when Lady Fanshawe waited on the King the morning after his arrival at Whitehall, Charles received her congratulations very graciously, and assured her of his Royal favour, at the same time presenting her husband with his portrait set in diamonds.

This loyal lady and devoted wife died in 1679–80, having survived her husband several years. Englishwomen may well be proud of one whose simple courage and unpretending heroism shed such lustre on their name.

ODDITIES OF EATING AND DRINKING.

What ought man to eat? In other words, what is man's proper food? A more embarrassing question could hardly be put. One man, blessed with an accommodating appetite, eats anything and everything which he can get, and finds all good; another picks and chooses and wastes; and some get so little of anything, that they are thankful to eat whatever comes in their way, and still do not eat too much. The difficulty is not to give a list of things which man eats in some part of the world or another, but to make out a list of things which he never uses for food. Everything that lives and moves in the air, in the earth under our feet, on the ground, or in the water, has been at some time or other eaten and relished. The vegetable world has yielded its treasures in the richest profusion for man's food; and not content with eating fruit, leaves, and flowers, he has found out that bark, roots, and grass can, at a pinch, take the place of more tempting viands, to say nothing of occasional banquets on his fellow-man.

"The Voyage of the Jeannette," a charming work, edited by Emma de Long, the widow of the heroic Lieutenant-Commander of that ill-fated ship, contains a touching account of the sufferings of the expedition: "At last, on October the third, they had to kill their solitary dog. On they struggled with stout hearts, but feeble limbs, burdened now with a dying comrade, who, some days later, relieved his messmates of a burden they could ill support. They buried him in the ice by the riverside with such naval honours as their slender resources permitted. Solid food was now all gone. For the next fortnight we meet with entries like these: 'October the seventh, for dinner we had one ounce of alcohol in a pot of tea, made from old tea-leaves.' 'October the tenth, last half-ounce of alcohol; eat deerskin scraps. Yesterday cut my deerskin foot-nips.' Then they had nothing for some days but a spoonful of glycerine. When that was finished they tried infusion of willow-leaves. The last mention of food is under date of October the fifteenth. 'Breakfast: willow-tea and two old boots.'" The rescuing parties found the diary near the dead body of the unfortunate Commander. It abounds in passages of the deepest interest and pathos.

As long as meat is eaten, one cannot see the smallest objection to horse-flesh, providing it is not diseased. Horses are brought to table and relished in many countries, and our neighbours across the Channel consider them wholesome; and the consumption is rapidly increasing. The "British Medical Journal," not long ago, very unnecessarily, as it seemed to me, protested against the exposure at Lambeth, when Mr. Stevenson, the Sanitary Inspector of Camberwell, came before Mr. Partridge, the magistrate, with regard to the seizure of a ton and a half of horse-flesh, intended, as he supposed, for human food. The Inspector had seen a horse slaughtered, and parts of its carcase packed in canvas coverings, and put into a van. He followed in a cab, keeping the van in sight, till it pulled up at a shop in the London Road, where a side door was opened and a parcel of horse-flesh delivered.

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The van was next driven to other places, and parcels were left — one at a beer-house.

Mr. Stevenson followed the van back to Linnell Road. The place was watched for some time, and admission obtained. In a loft, a quantity of what appeared to be horse-flesh was found, covered with a cloth. On the Inspector enquiring what it was, he was told:

"It is horse-flesh, and I am going to send it to Holland."

The speaker added that it was excellent for food, and that he had had a good steak from it.

Mr. Partridge asked the defendant if he wished to say anything in his defence. He replied that every parcel was sweet and good.

Mr. Partridge then enquired if it was for human food.

The defendant replied: "I don't know what they do with it when it gets to Holland."

The magistrate said he should fill up an order for the destruction of the flesh, and, when application was made, a summons would be granted against the defendant.

This abridged report shows that horse-flesh is wholesome, and that a certain trade is springing up in London; and why, let me ask, should it not? It may not be as cheap as some other kinds of food, but it is unobjectionable; and, were the law not to interfere, a good demand for it would arise, especially among the foreigners who, in increasingly large numbers, are settling in the metropolis.

A sort of cheap food, to which no objection can be urged, is snails; and the following letter interested me a good deal. It was signed "Vivarium," and was dated Torquay:

"Had the writer of the paragraph on 'Snails as Food,' which you have published, ever lived in the West of England, he would not have been so positive in his reference to the 'powerful national prejudice' of Englishmen to this nutritious and palatable article. Over a wide area, of which Bristol is the centre, through the winter, the common, large garden snail is a profitable, marketable article; and hundreds of bushels are sent to Bristol every week from the surrounding districts; the value averaging six shillings per bushel. At most oyster-shops and fish-stalls, 'wall-fish'—as prepared snails are called—are on sale. They are boiled and sold without their shells, and flavoured with vinegar and pepper, a penny a dozen. They are not unlike the common whelk. The evident relish with which the 'sons of toil' devour the tasty morsels, goes far in their favour. I have been assured by many working men that there is nothing more enjoyable and staying than a good meal of 'wall-fish.' Men may often be seen in Somerset, poking short, pointed sticks into the crevices of the stone walls, so abundant in that county, collecting snails; which are also found hibernating in banks and hollow trunks of trees. I have many times had them brought to my door for sale, 'fresh picked,' in the same way that blackberries are hawked about in rural districts. Snails are not eaten during the summer, as they are then considered to be unpalatable and gross."

This objection to them in summer is said to be without sufficient reason.

Horse-flesh and snails! "Well," vegetarians will exclaim, "what next? If these are wholesome foods, which are unwholesome?"

The "Horticultural Times," some little time ago, praised the onion in rather warm terms. Unfortunately, the pungent smell of this excellent vegetable makes it particularly offensive to many people; but few will deny that some palates are not favourably disposed to its pronounced flavour. Still, vegetarians assure us that "onions are diaphoretic, carminative, and soporific; diaphoretic — increasing the secretion of the cutaneous glands; carminative — training up the stomach, and assisting in digestion; soporific — quieting the nerves, and inducing sleep"—though why the organs of a healthy body should be stimulated to do extra work, I cannot quite see.

Human ingenuity probably never went farther than in some of the adulterations now perpetrated. What does the reader say to gooseberry jelly made entirely from seaweed? This is a fraud which the Paris Municipal Laboratory has brought to light. It is coloured with fuchsine, or some similar material; and the flavour is given by five parts of acetic ether, four of tartaric acid, one of succinic acid, and one of aldehyde, and œnanthic ether. This is, perhaps, happily capped by the following amusing story, which, however, I fear is not very new: It is related of a milkman in Boston, U.S.A., that a report had become current among his customers that his cows were suffering from disease; and on

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presenting himself one morning at a customer's door, he was informed of this by the lady, who told him that, under the circumstances, she did not wish him to leave any milk for the present. "Bless you, ma'am," he replied, "my milk never saw a cow." We are not told the effect of this reassuring statement on the lady, but we can imagine it.

John Ramsay, of Ochtertyre, informs us in the work recently edited by Alexander Allardyce, that the breakfasts of the Scottish gentry at the beginning of the last century differed widely from those of our day, and consisted of callops, fish, cold meat, eggs, milk-pottage, etc., to which was added water-gruel—"skink," a species of soup peculiar to Scotland—strong ale, or a glass of wine-and-water.

As a specimen of simple living, not accompanied by high thinking, however, the following passage, from a lecture by Professor Flower on the extinct Tasmanians, is worth studying:

"They were," he says, "quite ignorant of the potter's art, and had no vessels for holding water, except pieces of bark or shells. Their cooking was, therefore, of the most primitive kind, consisting chiefly of toasting on the embers of the fires, though their food was considerably varied, for nothing that was edible among the natural productions of the island, animal or vegetable, but seems to have served its turn on occasion. Kangaroos, opossums, bandicoots, wombats, seals, stranded whales, birds, lizards, snakes, ants, grubs, eggs, shell-fish, roots, seeds, some few fruits, and several species of fungi, are enumerated as ministering to their wants. Their sole drink was water, as, unlike the large majority of people even low in the scale of civilisation, no kind of intoxicating beverage had been discovered; and they knew not the luxury, with all its attendant evils, of tobacco, or of any corresponding narcotic for smoking. There is, moreover, no evidence that they ever resorted to cannibalism."

Mr. Charles Augustus Murray, in his charming "Travels in North America," in 1834-5-6, gave a lively description of the average routine of a Cuban dinner, which, he says, was as follows:

"First a soup, either of vermicelli or vegetables, generally containing a good deal of bread; then comes the pride of Spain, the olla, a kind of bouilli, which is eaten with a mixed dish of vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, cabbage, and a kind of pea—the last is apt to be large, yellow, tough, and dry; then several dishes of hash and 'emincé,' mostly dressed with eggs, and flavoured with garlic and onions; fried plantain, yams, and Irish or Guernsey potatoes, are on the table; two large dishes of rice occupy an important place; one plain-boiled, another flavoured with the gravy of two or three fowls, which are boiled in it, and also seasoned with garlic. Among the favourite side-dishes are dried beef, grated and served up warm with sauce; cotelette de mouton; a dish of boiled and seasoned tripe, or 'pied de veaux' and small croquettes of brains; the last are very good. When all these trifles have been disposed of, the attention of the company is called to roast guinea-fowl, roast turkey, and sometimes a dish of fish; but unless the house be close to the sea, the last is rarely presented, as it is impossible, owing to the climate, to keep it fresh many hours. I need not add that, in a Catholic country, there are also several modes of serving it up salted. Then, after all these skirmishes have been disposed of, comes the tug of war, in the shape of a joint of beef at the top, and another of roast mutton at the bottom, and a large salad in the middle. The beef is generally poor in flavour; but the mutton is excellent, although they commit the error, common to the whole western world, of killing it too young, and are generally obliged to eat it a few hours after it is killed; notwithstanding these disadvantages it is sweet, tender, and well-flavoured. If the dinner is given according to the real Criollo fashion, the party here breaks up and retires for a quarter of an hour to the garden, or to the shady wooden galleries round the house, where the gentlemen light their cigars and the ladies chat among themselves. After this quarter of an hour's rest, the black major-domo again summons the guests to table, when dessert is served, generally accompanied by a cheese from Old or New England. Here the richness and fertility of the island is fully displayed; the number and variety of the sweetmeats is perfectly astonishing. It is useless to record the names of all the fruits — even if I knew them — because many of them are totally unknown in Britain, and their names are untranslatable into our language.

"Some of these fruits are as follows: Mammee, about the size and shape of a small melon; Guana vana, a large fruit with prickly rind, chiefly used in making

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ice or sherbet; Sapote, called in Jamaica star-apple, something like a brown beurre pear, called in English 'Bury' pear; Cannito, a small fruit containing a sweet brownish purple pulp and two or three stones; Papaya—the pawpaw of Jamaica—this fruit is similar to, but ten times as large as that which goes by the same name in America; Naranjas de China and other varieties of oranges, as well as sweet lemons and limes.

"I have tasted them all, and have found none so pleasant to my palate as the one so familiar to sweetmeat lovers in England, under the name of Guava jelly. We have treated this word with much leniency, considering our usual habits when we naturalise names, as we have only lopped off one syllable, its proper designation being Guayava.

"Other dishes there are, however, the very sight or description of which might make the youthful inhabitants of a nursery or the mischievous tenantry of a boarding-school, male or female, lick their lips for half an hour: such as sweet cakes of maize, eaten with the purest extract of sugar, resembling molasses, and called here 'miel;' grated cocoa-nut bathed in lemon or citron syrup; a kind of marmalade made from the mammee fruit; various preparations of 'ciruelas,' or preserved plums; and many others, which I am unwilling to note down, lest some unfortunate master or miss should happen to cast his or her eye on this page and 'pine with vain desire' for these transatlantic sweets.

"The dessert being disposed of, coffee is served, generally without milk, and the lords of creation again betake themselves to their cigars. Such is a tolerably correct description of an average Cuban dinner-party. There is one part of the dietetic system in this island, which, although perfectly new to me, pleased me after the first few days very much. The dinner is generally about half-past two or three o'clock, and, after it, nothing more is eaten till bed-time, when a cup of hot 'café au lait' is offered to those who choose it. This abstinence during the later hours of the evening, is conducive to health; it makes sleep light and refreshing, and the sleeper wakes early in the morning with a cool head and a clear eye."

As a companion picture to this Cuban feast, let us consider the diet of rich Orientals. Eastern diet differs very much from that of Europeans, which will account for the dislike—might we say repugnance?—which the Shah exhibits for English dinners. According to Dr. W. F. Ainsworth, whose interesting articles on "Food and Cookery in the East" were, a year ago, published in "Diet and Hygiene," the following may be taken as an average Eastern menu: The first dish is almost constantly soup and the "pilau," the intermediate courses consisting of a variety of dishes. Among the more common and characteristic are mutton, in small pieces, roasted on iron skewers, with slices of apple, or artichoke bottoms, and onions between the pieces; mutton minced small, and beaten up with spices into balls, and roasted on skewers; mutton, or lamb, stewed with gourds, roots, or herbs; fowls, pigeons, and sometimes quails, or other birds, boiled or roast, but more frequently made into ragouts. A favourite dish consists of mutton, rice, pistachios, currants, pine-nuts, almonds, suet, spice, and garlic, which are enveloped in a cucumber or gourd; in the absence of either of these vegetables, the savoury mess is wrapped in the leaves of vine, endive, beet, or borage. Sometimes a lamb is stuffed in the same way, and roasted whole. Minced meat, generally mutton, with pomegranate seeds, is spread on thin cakes, and baked on an iron plate. A great variety of pies, and sweet dishes made with honey, or the juice of grapes, and pastry, help to fill up the banquet. A few plates of sweet flummery are served as dessert; and last of all appears a large bowl of "kushaf," which is a decoction of dried figs, currants, apricots, cherries, apples, and other fruit, made into a thin syrup, with pistachio-nuts, almonds, or some slices of the fruit swimming in the liquor. This compound is served cold as a drink.

When man is compelled to live simply and inexpensively, he submits cheerfully, and often thrives. Of this the best proof I can find is a passage throwing a very painful light on the sufferings of Major Greely in the famous Arctic expedition. Perhaps, however, my readers had better first learn something as to the intensity of Arctic cold, and then they will better understand what Greely and his companions endured. "It was piercingly cold; a bitter wind swept across the snow, making us glad to find even this poor shelter against the coming night. Two hours after dark the thermometer stood at minus thirty-eight degrees, or seventy degrees of frost. Oh, what misery it was! On again, next morning, over the trackless plain; thermo-

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meter at twenty degrees in morning, and twelve degrees at midday, with high wind, snow, and heavy drift. After four days of very arduous travel, we reached Carlton at sunset on the twelfth of January. The thermometer had kept varying between twenty degrees and thirty-eight degrees below zero every night; but on the night of the twelfth surpassed anything I had yet experienced. I spent that night in a room at Carlton, a room in which a fire had been burning until midnight; nevertheless, at daybreak on the thirteenth, the thermometer showed twenty degrees on the table close to my bed. At half-past ten o'clock, when placed outside, facing north, it fell to forty-four degrees; and I afterwards ascertained that an instrument kept at the mission of Prince Albert, sixty miles east from Carlton, showed the enormous amount of fifty-one degrees below zero at daybreak that morning, eighty-three degrees below freezing-point. This was the coldest night during the winter; but it was clear, calm, and fine." This remarkable passage is taken from one of Sir William Butler's well-known works on Canada.

"From the time of landing at Cape Sabine, the record of Greely's party is one of daily-increasing wretchedness and starvation. October the ninth they found a record of the loss of the 'Proteus,' the first steamer sent to their relief. The stores left for them were small in quantity, and the bread was mouldy and uneatable. The rations were gradually reduced to the lowest amount possible for sustaining life, until, on November the first, they consisted of about six ounces of bread, four of meat, and four of vegetables per man. At this rate it was calculated there would be sufficient to last till March the first. After that, ten days' rations would remain, of ten ounces of bread, ten of pemmican, and a small quantity of tea, on which to cross Smith Sound by sledge. It may be imagined that this slow starvation caused murmuring and insubordination among some of the men; the doctor reporting that health and strength could not be maintained upon it. And if we compare it with the starvation rations of Captain McClure, when relieved by Lieutenant—now Admiral — Bedford Pym, we shall more clearly realise the dreadful hunger which must have been suffered by Greely's party. Captain McClure's men were, when found, receiving half a pound of meat and two pounds of flour daily, and were even then so ravenous as to watch the division with lynx-eyed vigilance, lest a crumb should be extracted; and Lieutenant Bedford Pym said: 'The hungry looks on all sides of me are very painful.' Many also were suffering from scurvy. What then could Lieutenant Greely's party expect, when, in addition to rations so meagre, they were without sufficient shelter, and had to face a dearth of fuel for cooking? Lieutenant Lockwood, one of the bravest of the party, writes: 'This is miserable. We have insufficient supplies of everything. Even the blubber will support but one poor light, and that hardly for the winter. We must rely on the whale-boat and the barrel-staves mostly for fuel; the alcohol being almost exhausted. Cold, dampness, darkness, and hunger are our portions every day and all day. Here, in the boat, one has to grope in the darkness to find anything laid down.' Further on he says: 'Occupied some time this morning in scraping like a dog in the place where the moulded dog-biscuits were emptied. Found a few crumbs, and ate mould and all.' Thus they passed through the terrible weeks of darkness, during which one of their number, Sergeant Elison, became so terribly frost-bitten as eventually to lose both his feet and his hands. Then scurvy claimed its victims; insubordination grew worse and worse; petty thefts of food became frequent; and death began to run riot among the handful of brave men, left apparently to their fate by a forgetful country. Yet their Commander, with a load of anxiety on his shoulders too heavy to be borne, could try to keep up the flagging spirits of his men, by talking to them day after day, as they lay, cold and hungry, in their sleeping-bags, on various subjects, or reading to them by the light of the solitary Eskimo lamp — even the oil for which was begrudged as wasted food. Occasionally foxes were shot and consumed, the entrails being added to the stew for flavour. And on November the twenty-ninth, the feast of thanksgiving was celebrated with six pounds of rice, five of raisins, two of extract of coffee and chocolate, and two of milk; the record reading: 'To-day we have been almost satisfied, and had almost enough to eat.' November the thirtieth it was observed that the temperature was three degrees, the first time it had been above zero during the month. December the fourteenth it is noted that so many foxes had been shot as to admit

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of one being added each week to the mess; but as these foxes weighed only four or five pounds, it added only about a third of an ounce to each man's allowance in the week. From this time they struggled on, dying one by one, the rations being reduced to the lowest point possible; everything being consumed, even articles of clothing made of seal-skin. April the sixth, Rice and Frederick started, on a ration of six ounces of bread and six of pemmican, in a sledge in search of one hundred pounds of meat, which had been abandoned; but they could not find it, and the former died of exposure and exhaustion. All now they had to depend upon was such game as they could shoot, chiefly ptarmigan and dovekies, and shrimps, of which they caught many pounds. April the eleventh they succeeded in killing a bear and a small seal; but after that no game could be obtained, and May the fifteenth the last of the rations were consumed. After this, the survivors maintained life on shrimps, seaweed, and saxifrage. 'How we live,' says the record, 'I do not know, unless it is because we are determined to.' At this time, the sole subsistence of the party consisted of lichens, seaweed, and saxifrage, supplemented by articles of clothing made of seal-skin."

The moral of all this is that the human appetite is well-nigh omnivorous, and can dispose of almost anything, as far as quality goes; it is not less remarkable for the large and, as I have shown, when compelled by privation to restrict itself, small quantities of food it is satisfied with. Of its occasionally boundless capacity, the subjoined quotation from one of the Rev. Dr. Augustus Jessop's delightful papers is a proof:

"Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Aylsham lived a certain Jerry Eke, whose appetite was said to be superhuman, and whose prowess at harvest suppers was the boast, and wonder, and envy of the villagers round. It came to pass that, at a farmers' market dinner, the talk turned upon Mr. Eke's performances, when some one present protested that what had been narrated was impossible. 'Impossible!' said another, 'I'll bet you five pounds Jerry Eke will eat a calf at a sitting.' The wager was taken and the preliminaries were arranged. The calf—let us hope only a baby calf—was killed; the bones were removed, the flesh was cut into minute particles, and apportioned into seventeen enormous pasties, whose outer crust was a thin film of batter made lovely and tempting to every sense, but carefully kept from any ingredients that could cloy the palate. Jerry was called in, he having agreed to the wager with evident delight, and was told he might fall to. He did so, and steadily gorged. He had made no difficulty of the first nine pasties; but when a tenth was brought in he seemed to flag. To the horror of his backers, he sighed and looked perplexed. It was but for a moment; he desired only to expostulate: 'I say, mas'r, I ain't got nothing to say agin them pays, I loik 'em amazin'; but I'm a-thinkin' et's abaywt time as I should begin upon that ther calf!'"

Of what it can do when abstinence is enforced, I need only say that two pounds of bread a day kept many a poor Lancashire cotton-spinner alive during the memorable Famine; but that would be an enormous allowance compared with the amounts that have occasionally sustained life. Perhaps one of the most startling instances on record—though, no doubt, it could be paralleled by the privations of other shipwrecks and long battling with the waves—was that of Captain Bligh and his men. These unfortunates were set adrift in boats, near the Friendly Islands, and from the end of April to the close of May subsisted on a daily allowance of one-twenty-fifth of a pound of biscuit apiece, with a quarter of a pint of water, and occasionally a teaspoonful or two of rum. This last was, a hundred years ago, regarded as a valuable food, or adjunct to food; but, in our more enlightened age, we should question whether alcohol in any form would assist digestion, and many authorities would contend that its use is actually injurious; however that may be, two-thirds of an ounce of biscuit and a quarter of a pint of water would hardly make a mouthful for a ploughman. This quantity would represent only one-twelfth of the daily waste of the body, so that, before long, the system would use up all its reserve force, and death would inevitably take place. The mildness of the climate, however, had much to do with diminishing the requirements of the system.

We must not be too hard upon poor Northern savages whose exploits equal those of the Aylsham labourer, for the intense severity of their winter cold demands enormous quantities of food, and when they are withheld, death speedily takes place; still, we must confess that

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Eskimos, Greenlanders, and Yahuts are blessed with healthy and accommodating appetites.

The "Edinburgh Medical Journal," of 1857–8, gave the following humorous recipe for the preparation of homœopathic broth; no one need complain of its richness or fulness of flavour, and with this quotation I shall end my paper:

> Take a robin's leg,
> Mind, the drumstick merely,
> Put it in a tub
> Filled with water nearly;
> Set it out of doors
> In a place that's shady;
> Let it stand a week;
> Three days, if for a lady:
> Drop a spoonful of it
> In a five-pail kettle,
> Which may be made of tin
> Or any baser metal;
> Fill the kettle up,
> Set it on a-boiling,
> Skim the liquor well
> To prevent it oiling;
> One atom add of salt,
> For the thick'ning one rice-kernel,
> And use to light the fire
> The "Homœopathic Journal."
> Let the liquor boil
> Half-an-hour, no longer;
> If 'tis for a man
> Of course you'll make it stronger:
> Should you now desire
> That the soup be flavoury,
> Stir it once around
> With a stalk of savoury.
> When the broth is made
> Nothing can excel it;
> Then, three times a day,
> Let the patient smell it.
> If he chance to die
> Say 'twas nature did it;
> If he chance to live
> Give the soup the credit.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I. THE CURSE.

A CURSE was once laid on a man:

"It shall never leave you. It shall live through your living and sleeping. It shall be at your board, and go out with you into the streets. It shall poison your joys, and make blacker your sorrows. It shall watch over you, lying in wait for each moment of your mortal weakness, and it shall fall on you and overwhelm you in that hour when you, seemingly having triumphed over all dangers and fears, shall find life sweeter than ever it has been before."

A hideous curse for a man to carry with him through his days. Yet the sin that had evoked it was more hideous. A human life ruined—a human soul lost.

A murder, foul and dastardly—no less a murder because it was not his hands which had thrust that poor, desperate outcast, mad with shame, and want, and doubt of all things good in heaven and earth, into the black waters of a great city's river.

A father had laid his curse on this man.

It was a bright, frosty day in December. Riverbridge—a queer, old-fashioned town in one of the Midland Counties—looked quite lively and cheerful in the sunlight, for it was early yet in the afternoon.

Brend Aston—"Brend Aston on the Bridge," he was often called, his house being built close to the bridge which spanned the river, which, lower down, turned the water-wheel of his flour-mills—had been out into the country that morning. He was returning now to his luncheon, when he was stopped on the bridge by a middle-aged man, with a shrewd, pleasant face—the chief doctor of Riverbridge.

Brend Aston — tall, rather slightly built, with clean-shaven face, grave eyes, and well-cut mouth—was considered by many to be a very handsome man. His complexion, originally fair as a woman's, was tanned a healthy clear brown, by the constant exposure to the sun and air of a country life. His hair being very fair and also closely-cropped to his head, prevented the grey hairs being so visible, and this added still more to the youth of his appearance.

The first glance at his light, well-built figure, his fair hair, his active gait, made him look ten years younger than his actual age, which was forty-four. But there were times when, in revenge, he looked much older. This moment was one of them, though he was smiling as he talked to his friend on the bridge. But the smile on his lips had not reached his eyes, and it was this occasional discrepancy of light and shade on his face, which made some people deny his title to be called handsome. Indeed, some even affirmed that he, when powerfully and disagreeably moved, was positively ugly. But then, only a very few people in Riverbridge had seen that look on his face which called forth such an unflattering assertion.

"My dear Aston, you were a perfect fool! I told you so at the time. What was the use of your helping a drunken,

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degraded brute like Wilton? It was throwing your money into the gutter."

"It seemed hard not to give the fellow a chance."

Aston roused himself to answer as the Doctor at last came to a stop, choked by his anger and scorn.

"But it wasn't giving him a chance, unless you mean of sending him to the devil a little faster than he's already going. Shut him up in a room of your mill, and give him neither food to eat nor brandy to drink, and you will at least have the chance of improving him one way."

"By improving him off the face of the earth altogether!" with that same half-smile on his face. But his voice was weary, as if he were tired of the subject. The Doctor saw it, and changed the subject.

After all, if Aston chose to fling away his money by setting up in business a sot like Charles Wilton, it was his own account. The result had been just what the Doctor and all his other friends had foretold. Wilton's promises of reform had been the usual drunkard's resolutions.

The business had gone to rack and ruin; and, at the present moment, Wilton was in the town infirmary, suffering from a violent attack of delirium tremens, in which he had first tried to cut his wife's throat, and, failing that, had succeeded in making a considerable incision into his own. The Doctor had just come from the infirmary, where he had been visiting him.

"So I hear you expect your ward to-morrow," he said, changing the topic, and looking rather keenly at Aston.

Aston seemed to read something in the look; for he laughed, though the slight flush that deepened his colour was one rather of impatient irritation, than the amused consciousness of a man who had had set down to him for years, every girl of Riverbridge as soon as she arrived at young lady-hood.

"You'll have to do it some time!" said the Doctor, hearing only the laugh, and glancing away from the handsome figure, across the low parapet of the bridge to the great flour-mills which faced them down the stream curving at that point rather sharply round to the right.

These flour-mills made Aston one of the richest men in the neighbourhood.

"It isn't at all likely it will ever happen," said Aston, shortly. "Certainly, if it did, it would not——" He stopped, feeling the indelicacy of discussing such a matter about a girl who was coming, dependent on his care and protection, to his house. "Miss Garth is a mere school-girl," he added, with the touch of cold haughtiness his friends rarely felt.

"I didn't mean to be impertinent," said the Doctor, pleasantly, sorry for his careless jesting. "But you know there is always a little romance about a good-looking guardian and a pretty ward."

"I don't know about 'pretty,'" said Aston with a laugh, softened by the pleasant apology, for he and the Doctor were great friends. "When I saw her in Germany, two years ago, she was the plainest, gawkiest girl I had ever met."

The Doctor knew what two years can sometimes do for a girl's appearance, but said no more, not wishing to disturb his friend still more. He knew he was already perplexed enough by the coming of this ward into his bachelor's establishment.

"I'm going up to town to-morrow morning," he went on. "Can I be any use as an escort to Miss Garth?"

"Thank you," answered Aston, "but I am going up to-night. I shall run down to Dover to-morrow to meet her boat."

With a nod of farewell, the Doctor went on his way, leaving Aston standing on the bridge.

"Confound them for a gossiping crew!" exclaimed the latter to himself, generously comprehending all Riverbridge in his epithet. "Of course, they'll begin all this tomfoolery directly she arrives to-morrow. The order of the ceremony, even to the size of the bridal bouquet, will be arranged before the week is out. Shall we have a wedding-breakfast or not? Or, shall we wear our noses, or leave them at home? Hang them all!"

A few yards brought him to his house, the side wall of which was built close to the end of the bridge. It stood on the right-hand of the street. It was a queer, old-fashioned house. Outside, with its plain walls, and windows set level with them, it looked something like a mill itself; especially as there was very little attempt at decorating the windows with curtains or lace blinds. He opened the hall-door, and entered. Then, just on its threshold, came to a sudden stop.

It was an awkward hall. The staircase, to the right-hand, began almost immediately, leaving little more space than was sufficient for the width of the drawing-

room door, which lay also to the right. The staircase, beginning thus abruptly, left only a narrow passage, which, however, opened again at the further end into another hall—square, stone-flagged, with a picturesque window. On the right-hand of this were kitchen and cellars; and on the left, the dining-room. In this second hall, just facing the passage, and, therefore, immediately opposite the front-door, stood a young lady. She was dressed in hat and jacket, and was in the act of lifting a bundle of wraps from a table which stood against the window.

Even in the midst of his dismay and bewilderment, Aston saw that something unpleasant had taken place. He thought of his housekeeper, and hurried forward. It was as he suspected. The housekeeper, with a very disagreeable look on her face, was standing a few yards from the kitchen door. She had evidently been mutinous, and the girl, with her flashing eyes and brilliant colour, had resented it. Both women started as he came forward.

"Miss Garth!" he exclaimed. "I did not expect you to-day! I was coming to meet you to-morrow, as it was arranged. Jane," turning to the housekeeper, with an indescribable change in his voice which made it as hard as steel, "I hope Miss Garth's room is ready for her."

Jane came forward, and, lifting the bundle of wraps, went down the passage towards the staircase, with a sullen obedience her eyes belied.

There was a second's awkward pause, both of the two left behind wishing, for the other's sake, that the scene had not taken place.

Miss Garth, being a woman, broke it.

"The lady who was to bring me to England, was suddenly compelled to start a day sooner. She wanted me to telegraph to you; but you had told me I could come any day I liked. And I thought I would save you the trouble of meeting me." There was a faint note in her voice he did not quite understand. It might have been defiant resentment.

"It would have been no trouble," he said, gravely. "I suppose you arrived from town by the half-past two train. I hope lunch is ready," with anxious hospitality.

"I should like some, I am very hungry. I think I will go up to my room now—if I shan't inconvenience your housekeeper," with a touch of ingenuous malice. But then, the woman had been so insufferably rude to her, and it had been so uncalled-for. But she smiled up into his face with a smile that made him forgive even the housekeeper.

"Jane is entirely at your service—so am I," he said, smiling; then he went to the foot of the staircase and called Jane to come and show Miss Garth to her room.

CHAPTER II.

THE house was furnished just as it had been in the times of Aston's predecessors, distant connections of his, from whom, through the death of the last owner's sons, he had inherited the mills and house. He had altered nothing in it, and the furniture was just old-fashioned enough to look dowdy, and not old enough to have the interest and beauty of a time still more remote. But the dining-room was an exception. The furniture was magnificent. It had formerly been in the possession of one of the oldest families in the county, and had been bought by the late Mr. Aston at a sale at the Castle, the family having come to ruin. It was of carved black oak—massive dining-table, straight, high-backed chairs, couch, sideboards were simply works of art.

The room itself was the only handsome one in the house. It was really two made into one, and ran the whole depth of the house. In the front, it looked straight on to the street. At the back, it opened with glass doors into the gardens, at the end of which stood the mills. The garden lay brown and leafless in the bright winter sunshine. It was a quaint, old-fashioned garden, with flagged court and pathway; a line of picturesque old outbuilding lining it on the left, and serving as workshops and stores.

Miss Garth, coming into the dining-room a quarter of an hour later, stopped for a moment to look out. It suddenly flashed across her that she would find Riverbridge dreadfully dull. The room was divided in half by a large screen, which Miss Garth's artistic eyes swiftly defined as "shocking." She went towards it, and, passing behind, came in sight of the beautiful old oak.

When Aston entered he found her seated on one of the chairs, its dark wood and crimson velvet making an exquisite background for the pretty head.

"I shall never feel lazy here!" she exclaimed. "I couldn't! These chairs are meant for people with a backbone. Don't you think our ancestors must have

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been much better than we? They didn't lounge their time away in lovely, comfortable chairs. I had such a beauty in Germany. It came originally from America. But I never could do anything in it but eat sweets and read novels. In this chair I shall be forced to do yards of sewing, and read nothing more frivolous than history."

He laughed; but he was scarcely yet recovered from the shock of a discovery he had just made. Till that moment he had been too disturbed to think of his ward's personal appearance; but, as she met him with those laughing eyes, as he looked at the pretty, fair-haired head, pressed against the crimson velvet, he was brought to the sudden conviction that the lanky, plain school-girl had grown into the prettiest young lady he had seen for many years.

They sat down to luncheon, which was a very good one; for Jane, with all her shortcomings, was a splendid cook. Miss Garth chatted and ate away, apparently quite indifferent as to whether Aston answered her or not. He ate his meat in growing dismay and perplexity. Every moment, as he listened to her and looked at her, he wondered more and more how she was to exist in that sleepy hollow, Riverbridge.

After luncheon they did not go to the room in which Aston generally sat, and which opened off the dining-room.

Jane, with a sullen civility, told Miss Garth that she was making a few preparations in it, and that, as she was not expected till the morrow, they were not quite finished.

Miss Garth, who had taken a violent dislike to the woman, accepted the explanation with cold indifference, and then, drawing up one of the high-backed chairs to the fire, placed her pretty feet on the marble fender, and prepared, as she said, "for a good talk."

"You can smoke, you know," she said, nodding with a delicious imperiousness at Aston, who sat down on the other side of the fireplace. "I got used to that in Germany; and I think we ought to begin as we mean to go on. We ought to understand each other, ought not we?" looking across with her frank, innocent girl-eyes, into the face of the man of the world, who had known life almost to its dregs when he was little more than her age. "I am so glad to be here. What a funny old town it is! I saw a little of it coming from the station. I am longing to walk through it. And the mills—you must take me over them. Oh, I don't mind in the least getting covered with flour. And isn't that a brewery on the other side of the street? I smelt the hops as I came along, and heard the engines at work. Oh, it is all delightful!"

"I am afraid you will find it very dull. Flour-mills, and even breweries, are apt to grow monotonous, unless you have a personal interest in them; and then it is often more harassing than—profitable!"

"Business is very bad nowadays, isn't it?" she asked, with such pretty gravity that he could not help smiling. "I feel I owe you so much for looking so well after my affairs. I know how good you have been."

"Oh, that's nothing!" hastily.

"Not to you, perhaps, but to me," she answered, with a return of that note he had not understood before, and looking at him with a bright smile in her eyes which made him feel uncomfortable. "But, in spite of that trouble, I am afraid your most tiresome work is to come. You see, I am no longer a kind of abstract account-book, in which to enter various disbursements and gains to my debit and credit, and then to be pigeon-holed again into that distant German town; but I am now a living reality you will have to face every day. It will be dreadful for you!"

"Indeed—the contrary!"

His own conscience was pricking him very hard. There was so much truth in her words. Beyond looking after her money affairs, he had taken up very few other duties of guardianship, and had most cheerfully left her to the care of the family in Germany, with whom, by her dying father's wish, she had been placed till she was eighteen. All the six years she had been there, he had only gone over twice to see her, while his correspondence with the family had been most desultory. Up till now, he felt he had done his duty. He had trebled the small fortune her father had left her. But the young lady herself was putting his conduct in a new light.

"I am only afraid you will tire of it," he said, with a gentleness born of that uneasy conscience. "But there is one thing, you needn't stay longer than you like!"

She opened her violet-blue eyes in amazement.

"But I must be here at least a year,

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mustn't I?" with an emphasis that made the year sound like a century.

He laughed. At his time of life, a year seemed but a flutter of Time's wings. But she was still so young!

"Why are you laughing?" a little impatiently.

"I don't know. Certainly a year is long enough for heaps of things to happen in."

"You don't mean to say you are thinking of sending me away?" anxiously.

"Certainly not!" with an emphasis kindled by the shadow in such beautiful eyes. "But——"

"But what?"

"Oh, everybody knows what 'but' means in a young lady's life," he said, lightly, but feeling desperate before this very literal and imperious young person.

"Oh, that!" with a note of contempt mingled with relief. "For I suppose you mean that. But you mustn't really think any of that nonsense about me. There's no chance; not the slightest."

She looked at him with big, frank eyes, which had not the smallest self-consciousness in them. He met them with much outward gravity and considerable inward amusement. Truth forbade him assenting, and that simple unconsciousness made it impossible for him to even laughingly remonstrate with her.

"I have other plans for my life. I haven't quite decided yet. But when I do, I will tell you—— I suppose you would like me, as you are my guardian, to tell you things?" she added, meditatively, looking at him as if he were some very old fossil of that respectable species.

He started slightly, but recovered himself before his momentary discomposure attracted her attention.

"Perhaps it would be as well," he said, in the tone of a grandfather; indeed, he felt suddenly old enough to be her great-grandfather.

That calm gaze, with its thoughtful question, had been a revelation to him. He had not been thinking himself old, as he sat listening to her talk. Indeed, he had never felt himself to be old. It came now upon him like a moral douche, though the next second he felt that he ought to be glad, as the great difference in their ages removed much awkwardness from the relations between them.

"I don't wish to be a too exacting guardian," he said, with a kindly smile. "But if you want anything; if it will be a relief to you to tell me anything; if I can help you, either in trouble or happiness, till you leave me, my life is at your service."

"Thank you," she said. But her eyes were preoccupied, and she seemed hardly to take in the meaning of the simply-spoken words. But then, she did not yet know Brend Aston. If he undertook such a charge, he would carry it through till the death. There were others who understood him better, and it seemed as if a breath from the spirit of those who knew him so well stirred the air of the room like a deep, hard sigh.

Aston heard nothing. He was looking at, and thinking, too, earnestly of his beautiful young ward.

"Of course, I shall ask your opinion on all matters," she said, in the same abstracted way, "and——" she suddenly sprang up, and with a swift flash, like a bird on the wing, she darted to the screen and looked behind. As she suspected, Jane was there, listening. The housekeeper made a stealthy rush to the door; but the girl was too quick. It would have been better if Miss Garth had allowed her to escape quietly. But her indignation, her contempt, kindled into flame her hot, impetuous temper.

"When I am speaking to my guardian, I prefer no listeners," she said.

Jane turned instinctively, a look of such hate, anger, defiance in her eyes, that even Miss Garth was startled; but as the housekeeper hurried through the door, Aston came up.

"Don't mind her," he said, his voice unsteady. "It shall not happen again," with the look on his face which made some people call him ugly. A sudden, nameless fear chilled the girl from head to foot.

What sort of house was this she had come to, where the servant could play the eavesdropper, and cast such evil glances, and the master change from pleasant kindliness to this fierce, cruel-faced man?

"I wish I hadn't caught her," she exclaimed. "I did it on the impulse of the moment. It was very wrong——"

"I am full of shame that it happened," he said, the evil look gone. "I don't know what possessed her. She is an old servant—and as such, takes liberties. Why, poor little child, you are trembling."

"Oh! It is nothing," with a little, hysterical laugh, feeling reassured under his kindness. "I dare say she thinks me an interloper, and——"

"You will have your own maid to wait

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on you to-morrow. I am sorry she can't be here to-day. But I am going round now to ask Miss Ross to come to you at once. You aren't afraid of being left alone a little?"

"Afraid!" all her spirits returning. "What should I be afraid of? I shall go up and unpack. And you mustn't let me disturb your plans in any way."

Aston went off to the house where the cousin lodged who was to come and act as Miss Garth's chaperon during her stay at Bridge House. She, too, was not to arrive till the morrow; Jane, who ruled the house, having said that her room would not be ready till then.

Miss Ross was a stout, sweet-tempered old maid, some ten or twelve years older than Aston. She lived in Riverbridge when she was not visiting her numerous friends, and was always willing to do any service for Aston, who was very kind to her. Her income was of the narrowest; and the prospect of living a whole year free of expense, to say nothing of the idea of chaperoning a girl, which was always a pleasure to her, had made this plan of Aston's very agreeable to her. She was quite willing to come at once—only there was Jane. Miss Ross always found it good policy not to clash with Jane.

"Hang Jane!" broke out Aston, with a still more forcible exclamation following; to avoid the repetition of which, Miss Ross—being a devout woman—came away immediately.

CHAPTER III.

It was about eleven o'clock of the same day. Miss Garth, being tired after her journey, had gone to bed early.

Miss Ross had sat up, to talk her over with Aston. But she found him very unresponsive, and at last retired herself.

"She's a sweet girl," she said, as she wished him good-night. "I like her immensely. What a pity it is that she and Jane have come to a battle already!"

It was more than a pity, judging from Aston's face as he sat smoking in the sitting-room. He sat with his face turned towards the door which opened into the dining-room. Miss Ross had closed it after her, with a kindly precaution which had rather irritated him than otherwise.

The window was open, and, as he sat, he was in the current of air between the door and window.

"And you know, Brend, how bad your rheumatism was last winter. It was all very well for you, when you were young, to sit in draughts; but, at your age, you ought to be careful. It would be dreadful if you got it chronic, like me," with a half-suppressed groan, as she left the room.

But Aston forgot his slight annoyance, almost before the door was closed. He thought how little the tender fussiness of kindly women could avail to shut out the more deadly ills that assailed men's lives. He had one of his black fits on this night. A quarter of an hour later, when Miss Ross—satisfied that her sheets were well aired—had nearly finished her preparations for bed, and the pretty girl-guest was already deep in slumber, and there was no one to see nor hear, but that pale, gloomy-eyed man, sitting alone with his black memories in the room below, the door opened stealthily.

Jane stood on the threshold.

He knew she would come, and the expression of his face did not change.

"May I shut the shutters, sir?" she asked, in a civil tone, which everything in her face and bearing contradicted. She closed the shutters which opened, in a line with the dining-room, on the street. Aston went on smoking in silence. Then she came back from the windows and faced him. She tried to speak; but a tumult of passions choked the words. For a second, he, too, was silent. Then he tossed the end of his cigar in the fire, and looked up at her.

"You will understand," he said, deliberately, "that I will have no more such scenes of rudeness and disobedience as I have had to-day; when I add that your staying here depends on your obedience and civility to Miss Garth, you will understand that I am in earnest."

Her face was a study. It rang almost every change of human feeling as he spoke. Fear preponderated.

"You would never send me away?"

"It depends on yourself," with merciless hardness.

Then the rage within her burst out.

"You will not! You dare not!"

He rose to his feet, his face very pale, his eyes burning with a lurid light.

"You will find that I dare anything," he said, in even, steady tones. "I value my freedom of action so much, that, rather than lose it, I would turn you out of doors this very moment, let the consequences be what they may. And you know it."

She did know it, and was afraid again.

"You goad me into saying things I

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wouldn't. It is because I am afraid for you! You never think of the past. It is only I——"

A curious smile flickered across his lips, which chilled even her passion.

"On the contrary, there are so many to think. Mr. Charles Wilton makes it his immediate concern."

"Charles Wilton! That drunken fool! You had better have flung him into the mill-race, than have set him up into business. Do you think that would make him hold his tongue?"

Aston smiled again; that cold, inscrutable smile, which struck to her inmost being. A vague sense of its meaning fell on her. She knew so well the inexorable will of the man. She stirred uneasily. That act of charity, which had excited the wonder and disapproval of Riverbridge, was but a means to an end. It gave the drunken sot the power of indulging in the vice which was so swiftly hurrying him to destruction. But some more powerful feeling stirred her.

"Why did you let that girl come here? Was there no other place for her to go, with her golden hair and blue eyes? She will fool you! You will forget everything! Even the curse!"

"You are mad, Jane," he said, forcing himself to speak quietly. "Do not presume to couple Miss Garth with me. Good Heavens!" with an uncontrollable burst of rage, "is every one mad? What are they thinking of, that I cannot have a child like that in the house without all these absurd suggestions?"

"She's too beautiful," sullenly, "and you are but a child yourself, where beauty is concerned. To see her, day by day, to have her under your roof," her voice rose into a curious compound of rage and entreaty; "for Heaven's sake, send her away, before it is too late. You will be asking her to marry you—and the curse will fall—it will come home to you again, as it has——"

"Silence!" The pale quiet of Aston's face flamed into a fury, before which her anger seemed a pale, weak thing. "Leave the room."

She obeyed, cowed for the moment. Then her master's rigid figure drooped, and he sank trembling into his chair, large drops of moisture gathering on his brow.

And so he sat, while all the town lay hushed in sleep and darkness. To him the night brought no such passionless peace and rest, for it was haunted.

In this woman was the continual presence of the curse. To hush the horror of it, he had plunged more recklessly than before into sin and folly. It was in this life he had met this woman. There had been a quarrel in a low gambling-house, in which he had been seriously wounded. They had carried him back to the rooms where he lived, and the woman of the house, not wishing to have the trouble and responsibility, was going to send him straight to the hospital. But she had another lodger. A young woman, just on the point of leaving England for Australia. She offered to nurse the wounded man, though she had only seen him coming and going in the house.

The illness was long and dangerous. She lost her passage, and with it the opening she had had in Australia. She was a patient, unwearying nurse. When he began to recover, the doctors said he owed his life to her.

Aston, as he struggled back to life, was grateful. In the days of his delirium, when she sat by him, allowing no one to share her watch, he had betrayed many things. In his weakness, when physically and mentally helpless, dependent on her for everything, he told her more. It was a relief to speak.

The acquaintance had continued. A curious acquaintance. On his side, gratitude gradually faded into repugnance, fear, distrust. On her side, her tender care of him became——

Well, they both knew, though the subject was never mentioned between them. If she loved him blindly, madly; if she would have laid down her life for him to trample on; she never said a word. Nor did he ever act or speak as if he knew. But she clung to him. He could not throw her off. And when he suddenly and unexpectedly came into the possession of these flour-mills at Riverbridge, twenty years before, she had come, five years later, to be his housekeeper.

She was a plain, sallow-faced, ill-tempered woman. People wondered how he put up with her. But she stayed on at Bridge House, and her presence kept ever alive the memory of the curse; while not an event of good or evil, of honour or dishonour, in her master's life, was unknown to her.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 45.—Third Series. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1889. Price Twopence.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII. A STRONG ATTRACTION.

Hoel Fenner found great difficulty in getting rid of Miss Heaton after lunch on the Saturday when, quite against his better judgement, he had run down from town to Rushbrook. To do Clara Heaton justice, she had not the least idea or intention of getting married; her work was to prevent her brother from committing such folly, and this work allowed no rival object; but, on the other hand, Miss Heaton thought it her duty to find out the religious position of any young man she might ask to the Vicarage. She had faint notions that the glorious work of converting a young masculine soul must rank very high indeed, when the reckoning came; but by converting, Miss Heaton meant nothing at all like what is generally understood by that word. She considered the Salvation Army very low, and, being outwardly High Church, would not have asked any one if they were saved. When analysed, Miss Heaton's feeling might have been called, by some ill-natured persons, one of mere curiosity. She wanted to know exactly what were the religious opinions of her visitor. If they agreed with hers, then she merely abused all the other Church parties; if the opinions did not harmonise with hers, then she tried to show the visitor how very mistaken he was. It must be added, however, that Miss Heaton never held these conversations before Herbert; even for her it was difficult to be severe upon the religion of others in his presence, because Herbert Heaton seemed so much the embodiment of charity that, without his making any objections, everything that was not seasoned with the greatest of gifts fell flat.

Miss Heaton found Mr. Fenner strangely unwilling to talk about his religious feelings, even though Herbert had left them alone to go to a clerical meeting at Greystone; and, stranger still, as soon as he politely could, Hoel Fenner said he had business with Mr. Kestell, and disappeared. Miss Heaton settled that she would find out Mr. Fenner's spiritual state on Sunday evening, when Herbert went off to a cottage service in a lonely hamlet some two miles away.

"From his answers to me, now, I very much fear Mr. Fenner is a Freethinker," said Clara Heaton, preparing to take out some beef-tea to a sick woman, "and, if so, I think I can soon show him how extremely wrong he is."

Hoel never gave his hostess another thought when he was once out upon the moor. He very much admired Herbert Heaton for being a man who, as far as he could find out, lived up to his belief, and who was a shepherd in deed as well as in name; but as for his sister, "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "why do such women exist? It must be to make religion more difficult to believe in."

Once with his back to the Vicarage, Hoel Fenner gazed down upon Rushbrook House with a strange, new feeling of admiration. The great moor, with its yellow paths and its delicious scent of heather and gorse, filled him with a new life of feeling. He could see the grey house where she lived peeping out from a bower of tree-tops, as if stretching its neck to see above the oaks and beeches what was taking

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place on the open moor. Hoel looked about him to try and find the place where he had met Elva; but he was not near enough to it. Perhaps she would be walking or sketching to-day on this moor; why not look for her? On the left of him was a copse of larch, and oak, and pine, which wandered irregularly down between two hills. Here the murmur of the wind seemed less harsh than in the plantation where only firs were found. To Hoel—at this moment emptied of himself, because Nature was so full of other thoughts and impressed them upon him, and because love had found a weak place in his armour—it appeared possible to him to forget himself in loving another. He wondered why he had never felt like this before; why he had spurned the idea of love; why he had hesitated and reasoned when, at last, he had seen the only woman who had appeared to him to rise out of a crowd, and, not by her special beauty or her special talent, but by an irresistible charm, to be to him the embodiment of woman.

"I have been a fool to argue about it. I fancied I was proof against all the fascinations of women; and now I find that I can't forget this girl who had no wish to fascinate me."

At this moment Jesse Vicary's affairs faded from his mind as if they were non-existent. All he wanted was to see Elva again, and to find out whether this new feeling would leave him as suddenly as it had attacked him.

Elva was sitting on the garden-seat with a book in her hands when she heard the click of the gate; and, to her surprise, she saw Hoel Fenner approaching her. She had time to note once more every line of his handsome face, and to think to herself that certainly she had never seen such a handsome man, and such a perfect gentleman. Even though the thought of the criticism at once rose to her mind, it was not without a feeling of pleasure that she rose from the seat and came forward to greet him.

"How strange you should come to Rushbrook to-day!" said Elva, so naturally that Hoel Fenner felt she was perfectly unconscious of his motive. He had come down with no anxiety as to the result; but her reception of him made him feel almost as if the former self-possessed Hoel were not the same as the present Hoel who was trying to appear natural.

"I—I dare say you are surprised to see me again so soon, Miss Kestell. I have come—partly on business. You remember my telling you about your father's protégé, Jesse Vicary? Well, I have ventured to come on his behalf. I wished to speak to Mr. Kestell about his future."

Hoel sat down on a chair which he placed a little on one side of Elva, so that he could watch her face. He seemed to see a new beauty in it. The expression seemed deepened, and less that of a wilful girl, and the idea seized him that perhaps Elva had a lover, and that he was not the first, and would have come down here in vain. This idea at once enhanced the value of the prize, for Hoel was a man who hated failure.

"Then you have come at a good time. Jesse Vicary is at the farm; but papa is, I am sorry to say, not at home to-day. He is going to dine with a gentleman at Greystone on business. I suppose you will stay till Monday; and if you don't mind leaving Mr. Heaton to-morrow evening, I know papa will be glad to see you. Come and dine with us."

Elva had forgotten that she did not mean Hoel to come and break bread in Rushbrook House, for some of her charm lay in that quick change of feeling which made it impossible to be sure how she would act.

"Thank you," he said; and then there was a pause, a pause which Hoel knew at any other time he would not have allowed in a conversation; but he was learning that he could fail in small talk.

"I am glad you can leave your work," said Elva, her dark grey eyes suddenly flashing out a little defiant light. "I thought critics always read the stupid novels on Sunday, instead of going to church."

Hoel could not help smiling.

"You do not agree that the better the day the better the deed?"

"You know I disapprove of 'the deed;' or, rather, I dare say you have forgotten all about my thoughts on the subject."

"Indeed I have not. Perhaps you will not believe me if I say that I came here partly to be taught some more critical duties."

"You are saying this only as a compliment," said Elva, impatiently. "You forget that I am a constant reader of the 'Review' in which you write."

"Then you have perhaps read what I said of Hudson's book on 'The Laws That Govern Actions.'"

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"Yes," said Elva, thoughtfully, leaning her cheek on her hand; "but I noticed that you did not say much about suffering. I have often remembered what you said to me about it—that one could not write without having understood that word in some practical way."

Hoel remembered perfectly; but he had the power of saying many things well, which things, however, he never cared to put into practice. He was like Benvenuto Cellini, who fancied he saw a resplendent light hovering over his shadow. If Hoel thought of possible pain, he also fancied he would be able to have a resplendent light over it.

"I was, however," he rejoined, "much interested in that chapter of it which dealt of what men have accomplished when actuated by motives of despair."

Elva suddenly looked up, and one of her bright smiles flashed out amusement, so that Hoel felt a little nettled by it. It was just that touch in her of original thought which he admired, at the same time that he was a little afraid of its being used against himself. It seemed that this country girl might just find out that portion of him which was not entirely sincere. Hoel did not put this into words, he only felt it; but it made him more eager to make Elva acknowledge his superiority. The intricate motives which guide the actions of men and women are sometimes fathomed, as if by inspiration, by those of the opposite sex; and Elva had by chance done this now.

"I can't imagine your feeling despair about anything," she said, taking up the book she had been reading, and which she had put down. "I am sure you would criticise your despair away if you ever had it."

"Then you disbelieve in anything spontaneous in me? How can I make you alter your opinion?"

Elva laughed now; it was the laugh of a bright, joyous woman on the threshold of a happy life. She was not going to tell her secret, even if she forgave Hoel; and something in him was beginning to attract her powerfully; it was the charm which had attracted many other persons, and which gave Hoel so many friends.

"Don't try to, because, if you knew me, you would understand that I never care to analyse opinions. A woman somehow guesses at truth without analysing, as you clever men are accustomed to do. We like change, I suppose, and not to go always along the same lines."

"And do you like change so much?"

"Yes, I do. I like being honest, though I suppose I shall shock you. I like change in all that is around me, and yet I like the same things to be always about me. Is that a contradiction? Amice says she is never sure what I shall like or dislike, and yet she knows me better than any one else. But how horrid to talk about oneself! Don't you think it is never oneself one talks about, but a person one has set up before one and called oneself? To talk about oneself is to talk about a definite person; and, in reality, I don't know myself at all; I can't be sure of what I shall do next, even when I have settled it definitely."

Elva rose up from her seat and laughed again. Hoel looked at her now in surprise. Yes, she was original; there was nothing about her of the silly woman, which personage could never have appealed to him, and yet there was a strange uncertainty which took one continually by surprise.

"You only experience what most of us do feel some time or other; except—yes, when we have a very definite object in view, and then we do not allow that changeable self its way; we turn neither to the right hand nor the left. But that variableness of mind is always present in poetic natures. I fancy you must admire poetry. Your volume looks like a poet."

"Yes, I love poetry. It seems to me almost like wandering on our moors. This is Keats; do you like him?"

"A miniature painter in very bright colours; but he died too young to give us his full maturity of thought."

"Maturity of thought!" said Elva, impatiently, "that would not have been like this, it would have killed the best in him. He would have framed his mind after the pattern of critics, and we should have had a Keats who painted by rule."

Elva sat down, and turning over the pages of her little volume, she said:

"Do you know this, Mr. Fenner? What beauty would maturity have added to it?

"Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness."

And she repeated half-a-dozen lines of this poem.

Hoel hardly heard the words, the music of the rich, clear voice was enough enchantment to a man in love. But was he in love? "Yes, certainly," he said, in answer to this question. "No woman has ever before made me feel content to sit by her and listen to her."

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Elva did not wait for any remark when she had done; perhaps she feared that Hoel would criticise something she loved, and happily Amice appeared at this moment, and Hoel found himself looking, with great interest, at Elva's sister for the first time. Neither was he to escape the strange feeling of having before him a being not fitted for common humanity, which, on the whole, rejects mystery as an insult to its understanding.

Elva went to meet her sister, and Hoel followed; and when he shook hands and noted the marble-like face and the lifeless touch of the hand, he wondered how two sisters could be so unlike each other. The one, beautiful, with health, life, colour, and bright eyes flashing out intelligence like jewels in darkness; the other, cold as clay, unapproachable as a spirit form; and yet Elva seemed quite unconscious of the effect her sister must have on strangers.

"You must come in to tea," said Elva, thinking more that she would like Amice to see this noted, clever man than of any conscious feeling herself about him. "But come and stand a moment on our bridge, Mr. Fenner. We think the view from here is perfect, and the Pool is always giving us all new thoughts. Papa comes here every day after dinner; it's a habit. And I have seen you, Amice, lean over the parapet for ten minutes without moving. Generally, however, my sister is to be found in dirty cottages."

"That is quite a fashionable taste," said Hoel; but feeling at once it was a foolish speech to this girl, for she turned her large, blue eyes upon him—eyes which he fancied he had never seen before, and which at once gave him a dislike of blue eyes. He could not account for the repellent force that seized him.

"I believe it is; but here we are quite away from the effect of fashion, I hope. I like poor people, so I do not take any credit for going to see them."

"That is not your taste, I think, Miss Kestell?"

Hoel turned from one sister to the other as one would turn away from a corpse to a beautiful woman standing near by.

"No; I don't like dirt and poor people. I am sorry for them; but one can be sorry without hearing all about their pains and aches." They paused on the bridge. "You do admire this, don't you? Look, the reflections cheat us with a double reality—and that filmy shadow of the filmy silver birches. Keats could have described it; no one else."

"It is the little bit of blue sky reflected in the midst of it which makes it so lovely," said Amice, as if to herself, "an unknown height in an unknown depth."

Elva put her arm in her sister's, and Hoel felt jealous of this mutual sympathy.

"It is Amice who is the true poet, Mr. Fenner; but she persists in hiding all her talents! There is one special thing about poets—I am not sure whether it most makes or mars them—which is, that unhappiness always seems to pursue them even when they are happy: I mean real poets, those who have given us something inspired."

"They cannot forget that they are surrounded by themselves, or, perhaps, they do not wish to forget it; but, after all, they only feel much, what, I suppose, we feel a little."

"Keats does not say that," said Amice, suddenly.

> "And can I bid these joys farewell?
> Yes. I must pass them for a nobler life,
> Where I may find the agonies, the strife
> Of human hearts."

But Elva's mood changed.

"Let us come in to tea," she said, quickly; "mamma will be expecting us."

At this moment a figure appeared by the Pool; and, without exactly meaning it, the three paused to see who it was. Hoel was close by the gate of Rushwood House, and Elva was by his side. Only Amice had walked a few steps up the drive.

It was Walter Akister who passed; and Hoel at once noticed the deep blush that overspread Elva's face, the dark, surly look on the face of Mr. Akister, and the perfect silence in which his bow was received.

The whole scene took but a minute, and then he was out of sight; but for Hoel it was enough. Elva became at once more precious in his eyes; for there are few men who do not value a woman more if she is coveted by another. For Love is a highly-polished diamond with many facets, and in each a different picture may be reflected.

Hoel knew very well that he was falling, nay, had fallen in love. He could even study the phase in all its bearings. He was not deceived in himself; but that was his way, and not the less real because he had the power of arguing over each step of the way he was taking.

He spent a delightful hour in the pretty

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drawing-room where everything breathed of comfort and refinement; but as Mrs. Kestell found herself well enough to come in and be entertained by him, there was no more private conversation. He walked home in the falling light across the moor, and up to the Vicarage, convinced that Elva was worthy of being Mrs. Hoel Fenner. He even acknowledged her superiority over himself in that indescribable original force which attracted him in man or woman, though at the same time he knew that, as far as the outward eye could see, he was infinitely her superior. He felt, too, that he was like a beautiful building raised by skill and patient labour, whilst she was one of the grottoes which Nature had reared for herself, in order, as it seems, to laugh man's effort to scorn.

THE FORTH BRIDGE.

THE close of the year 1889 will be memorable for the completion of one of the most wonderful and daring engineering achievements in the history of human effort. The occasion, therefore, is meet, in which to give some account of this exploit.

Merely to look at, the Forth Bridge is a wonder, with its masses of ironwork towering to what seems an awful height by contrast with the surrounding level of land and sea, and stretching its great arm to an apparently limitless distance over the surging waters. Certainly it is one of the most impressive sights in the world, as mechanical devices go; and, as a bridge, it has the longest span, the greatest weight, and the greatest strength of any yet constructed. And, distinctively, it is the largest cantilever construction ever attempted. Perhaps, to the untutored eye, the greatest wonder about it is how it manages to hold together at all, and what is the mystery of its strength.

It is our purpose to do something to remove this mystery, and to explain, in language suited to non-experts, the structure of the bridge, which is to form the link in the great north traffic by way of Edinburgh.

Heretofore, such of that traffic as passed over the system of the North British Railway Company has had to be conveyed across the Forth—from Granton, a few miles below Edinburgh, to Burntisland, on the Fife shore—by means of huge steam-ferries, worked at enormous expense. Hereafter, passengers and goods will never leave the carriages, but, running on from Edinburgh to Queensferry, will be whirled across the new bridge in a few minutes, and thence over the Fife lines to any part of the railway system of the north of Scotland.

The idea of a bridge across the Firth of Forth is not a new one, and, long before railways were thought of, there was one projected. This, and all subsequent proposals, naturally centred at Queensferry, because the Forth there is at its narrowest, and, also, because in mid-channel there is a rocky island called Inchgarvie, which seems placed there on purpose to support a central pier. Then the banks, too, on each side are steeper than at other points, and thus provide better bases for working from. But, while comparatively steep, these banks do not exceed one hundred and fifty feet or so above the level of the sea which has to be traversed.

Some eighty years ago there was even a project for a suspension bridge across, almost on the very line of the present one; but nothing came of it.

About twenty years ago there was a proposal to run immense ferry-steamers across here, each steamer to be capable of carrying an entire passenger train. A beginning was actually made to build the necessary piers on the Queensferry side; but the work was discontinued when, in 1873, the Forth Bridge Company was formed, and obtained an Act of Parliament to build a bridge across the Forth, on the plans of Sir Thomas Bouch.

This bridge was to have been on the suspension principle, and was estimated to cost only about one-half of what the present structure will cost. But, before any but preliminary work was done, the collapse of the Tay Bridge, in 1879, with the attendant awful loss of life, caused the abandonment of Sir Thomas Bouch's scheme. There are still many engineers who are of opinion that it would have been perfectly safe; but the Tay Bridge catastrophe gave both experts and non-experts a fright.

After a pause, in 1880, the three great railway companies interested in the north traffic—to wit, the North Eastern, the Midland, and the Great Northern—laid their heads together, along with the North British, to consider what was best to be done. A committee of specialists was appointed to examine plans and deliberate on the line of action, and these in 1881 finally recommended the construction of a

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steel bridge on the "Cantilever and Central Girder" system, according to a plan designed jointly by Sir John Fowler and Mr. Benjamin Baker. Thereupon the Forth Bridge Company adopted this plan, appointed these two gentlemen their engineers, obtained another Act of Parliament to empower them to proceed, and secured the financial assistance and guarantees of the railway companies we have named. Then tenders were invited for the construction, and a contract concluded, in December, 1882, with the firm of Tancred, Arrol, and Company, for the entire execution of the whole work. It was Mr. Arrol, of this firm, who built the new and successful Tay Bridge; and it was his partner, Mr. Phillips, who built Westminster, Charing Cross, and Cannon Street Bridges.

Such, in brief, is the history of the scheme, until the actual bridging of the Firth of Forth began in 1883.

It is now necessary to say something of the cantilever principle, which is the foundation of the design of Sir John Fowler and Mr. Baker. This is not, of course, the place for scientific definition and technical detail, so we may say in plain terms that a cantilever is simply a bracket. Everybody is familiar with a suspension bridge, and has some sort of general idea of how the structure is suspended upon chains, which are secured over high pillars at each end. The cantilever, however, is merely a bracket built out from the shore by welding iron beam on to beam until it meets a similar bracket sent out from the opposite side. The homely illustration has been used, and may be here repeated, that it is like two men on opposite sides of a stream stretching out their arms to join hands, and using a stick to complete the connection.

In the case of the Forth Bridge, there are two sets of these brackets. One arm extends from Queensferry to meet in mid-channel a fellow sent out from Inchgarvie; another arm goes out from the other side of Inchgarvie to meet one extended from the Fife shore. These two separate spans —they are not arches—are each twice the width of the widest arch of Blackfriars Bridge.

In general appearance, the Forth Bridge is that of three huge towers, about the height of St. Paul's, each with a bracket projecting from both sides.

These brackets, or cantilevers, do not rest upon the shore, but are connected with the respective shores by a viaduct supported on arches. The peculiarity of the Forth brackets is, that they are double—that is, supported from both top and bottom—and that they are united in the middle by girders. This peculiarity is not claimed as original, but it has certainly never before been applied to spans of seventeen hundred feet.

It is probable that the Forth Bridge could never have been constructed, but for Sir Henry Bessemer's great discovery of cheapening steel. This, with the later improvements of other inventors, has provided a material with which no other could have compared, or could have been provided so economically. The virtues of "mild steel" are in its toughness, rigidity, and strength, combined with a minimum of weight. It has been employed in cantilever bridges in America, but never before, we believe, in this country.

The Niagara river is now crossed by a bridge with two cantilevers, and a span of four hundred and seventy feet; and at New York there is one projected, since the assured success of the Forth Bridge, of one with a span of two thousand eight hundred feet. Some persons have even dreamed that the principle may be yet applied to bridge the Channel which divides England from France.

At the Forth Bridge there are stone arches supporting the viaduct on the dry land at either end, and the portion which actually traverses the water is in three sections. Some seven hundred feet from the shore at each end, piers have been erected from the sea-bottom, of a very massive character. The masonry of these piers is seventy feet diameter at the base, and fifty feet at the top, which is only a few feet above high-water mark. Upon these piers the vast structure of the cantilever towers rests.

The tops of these towers rise to a height of three hundred and sixty feet above the sea-level, and about two hundred feet above the level of the roadway. The bracket on the seaward side of each extends outwards towards Inchgarvie for six hundred and eighty feet. Upon Inchgarvie a similar structure is built, extending arms on both sides which come within three hundred and fifty feet, meeting the arms of the north and south cantilever piers. The intervening gaps of three hundred and fifty feet between the brackets are connected by girders, the completion of which is going on while we write. Each

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of the north and south cantilevers is one thousand five hundred feet long, and that from Inchgarvie is one thousand six hundred and twenty feet long.

The total length of the brackets and girders is a few feet over a mile. The total length of the whole bridge from shore to shore is about a mile and a half; or, inclusive of the masonry arches, eight thousand two hundred and ninety-six feet. The masonry arches carry out the bridge from the south side about one thousand seven hundred and eighty feet, which is where the deep water begins. Over these arches the bridge is carried on steel lattice-girders, the distance between each stone pier being a hundred and sixty-eight feet. On the north side there are five of these stone piers; on the south, ten. The most seaward pier of each side is larger and stronger than its neighbours, and receives the end of the cantilever arm extended across the deep water.

Each of the cantilever piers sustains four huge steel columns, each as high as the cross on St. Paul's, and twelve feet in diameter. These columns are bedded in the masonry, which, again, is founded deep down in the rock below the sea-bottom. They are welded down with massive plates and bolts, and the idea of the strength of the foundation needed may be gathered from the fact that they have to sustain a weight of fifty thousand tons. From these steel towers spring out the cantilever arms as already described. The method on which they are constructed and supported is extremely interesting from a mechanical point of view; but to describe it would require the use of more technical language than is suited to these pages.

The permanent way of the railroad will run through the cantilevers about half-way under their highest points, and through the intermediate girders. The flooring is of steel, and the sleepers are placed, not across as on an ordinary railway, but in four longitudinal troughs. The rails are laid lengthwise on the sleepers, and the sides of the troughs act as guard-rails. Then, the rails are not joined in the usual manner, because allowance has to be carefully calculated for the alternate expansion and contraction of the immense mass of metal forming the bridge. Therefore the rails have been made in pieces with long tapering ends. These ends overlap each other for a considerable distance, so that the pieces will slide backward and forward with the expansion and contraction of the metal-work. There is thus no break in the line of railway, and trains will pass over it in all states of the temperature with perfect smoothness and evenness. A strong hand-rail, and a screen against the wind, are also carried along the footway.

The entire mass is built of steel, and every plate and bolt was subjected to the most severe tests before being put in place. The tension steel is made to withstand a pressure of over thirty tons to the square inch, with an elongation in eight inches of not less than twenty per cent. The compression steel will stand a stress of thirty-five tons to the square inch, with an elongation in eight inches of not less than seventeen per cent. The average strength of the steel employed is one-half greater than that of the best wrought-iron.

Both on the viaduct over the stone piers, and that on the cantilevers, careful provision has been made for the action of changes of temperature, and the pressure of wind. The structure is so poised that the whole of the piers will act in concert in resisting pressure, both lateral and otherwise. A maximum wind pressure of fifty-six pounds per square foot of surface and train exposed, is provided against, and forty pounds is the highest recorded pressure in this country. The main portions of the bridge present an exposed surface estimated at seven and a half acres, and the pressure provided for on this surface is more than eight thousand tons. The pressure of the rolling of a passing train in a high wind has also been nicely calculated; and it is estimated that the vital portions of the bridge would stand a strain of nearly fifty thousand tons before showing signs of giving way.

As to the strength of the cantilever arms, Mr. Baker, one of the engineers, says that half-a-dozen ironclads could be hung from their ends. To those who have ascended the Eiffel Tower, it may give a vivid idea of the length of the spans to be told that the tower, laid alongside Forth Bridge, would only extend half-way across one of these spans.

We have likened the cantilever to two men stretching arms across a stream, and requiring a stick to complete the connection. In the case of the bridge, that stick is the girder. How was it placed?

When the cantilever arms came within three hundred and fifty feet of each other, the girders were brought along in two halves. One half was extended from each side of the facing cantilever, and was built

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out from its base, at a steeper slope than it was intended to occupy. It was wedged up with timber and supported with steel straps, and so was gradually projected until it met its other half. Perhaps the process will be better gathered from a description of a recent writer during the construction:

"The girder is built up in two pieces, which are carried forward to meet one another in the middle. Till they meet, they are rigidly connected by ties at the top and supports at the bottom, on to the cantilevers, of which, for the moment, they form a part. As soon as the two halves get within a few feet of one another, advantage will be taken of a warm day—when the structure will have expanded to its full length — to lay the last plate between them, and to drop the rivets into their appointed holes. Then, as the ironwork cools down at night, the pull from the top of the towers will draw up the weight of the girder and counteract its natural tendency to sag in the middle, and the opportunity will be seized to form the junction true and straight. Once the girder is firmly joined up into one continuous piece, the temporary fastenings will be removed, and it will be allowed to drop into its permanent resting-place, on rollers at the end of the two cantilevers."

This, in effect, is how it was done, and the last girder was connected on the fifteenth of October last, in presence of the directors, who were thus enabled to walk from shore to shore. The weight of each girder is about eight hundred tons, and a very nice calculation has been necessary to preserve the exact balance of the cantilevers, with all this and other superimposed weight on the ends. It is obvious that every load added to one arm of the cantilever required a corresponding load at the other. Thus, about one thousand tons of iron ballast had to be placed at the south end of the Queensferry cantilever, to counteract the weight of the girder connecting it with the Inchgarvie cantilever.

During the six and a half years that the bridge has been in course of construction, a perfect army of workmen has been employed; large numbers at the most difficult and dangerous jobs. The year 1887 saw no fewer than four thousand men employed on the bridge; and the work went on continuously night and day, the electric light being laid on for the purpose. The mortality by accident has been very heavy, especially when the caissons were being sunk for the piers; but the most elaborate precautions for life-saving were adopted, and when the men were employed on the elaborate iron-work of the cantilevers and girders, boats with life-buoys, etc., were always cruising about below.

As regards the maintenance of the bridge when completed, it is computed that at least one hundred men will be constantly required in attending to the painting, etc., the twelve acres of steel surface which it presents to the action of the atmosphere.

The actual cost of the undertaking has yet to be stated; but it will not be short of two millions. It will probably be something more, but not so much as three millions, the estimate which Mr. Acworth has made. The cost of the bridge itself, however, is not the whole of the outlay connected with the scheme of which it is part.

In order to complete the new northern railway service, a line of railway has had to be constructed from Winchburgh, on the Edinburgh and Glasgow line, to Dalmeny, near the south end of the Forth Bridge. On the north side of the Firth, lines had to be constructed to Inverkeithing and Burntisland, and the existing line to Dunfermline has had to be doubled. But much more difficult and costly than these works has been the construction of a new railway through the beautiful Valley of Glenfarg to Perth. This route, as has been said by Mr. Acworth, who has now established himself as an authority on railways, is by no means one which an engineer would choose of his own free will. Although for many years it was the regular mail-coach route from Edinburgh to Perth, no attempt has, until now, been made to carry a railway through Glenfarg. There is so little room for one, that the river has had to be diverted from its course, and the hills have had to be tunnelled. But it was necessary to enable the passengers by the east-coast lines, viâ the Forth Bridge, to get to Perth in the shortest possible time. For Perth, as everybody knows, is the key to the Highlands; in the autumn season the centre of the busiest traffic in the whole country. Those only who have seen Perth Station in the middle of August, can understand the motive which has prompted all this mechanical effort and enormous expenditure which we have been describing.

To sum up the cost, then, we will take

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the figures of an estimate recently made by the "Glasgow Herald," a paper from which we have taken many of our figures. First, there is the expenditure of the Forth Bridge Company:

For the Bridge itself	£2,000,000
For the South Approach . . .	10,000
For the North Approach . . .	90,000
Total of Bridge : .	£2,100,000

Next, there is the expenditure of the North British Railway Company:

For the Burntisland and Inverkeithing Lines	£212,146
For the Glenfarg and other works on the North of the Forth	434,048
For the Winchburgh and Dalmeny Lines	123,518
Total of Railways . .	£769,712
Add total of Bridge . .	2,100,000
Total of undertaking .	£2,869,712

These are the estimates in the meantime; but before the whole route is open to traffic, it is pretty safe to assume that the gross expenditure will be well on the way to four millions.

And for this tremendous expenditure and extraordinary exercise of mechanical ingenuity and inventive skill—for the building of the bridge has necessitated the constant evolution of clever devices for overcoming difficulties of all sorts—what is to be the compensating gain?

For one thing, it removes the monopoly of the traffic which the Caledonian Company have had north of Stirling. It will shorten the journey from London to Perth by twelve miles, and from London to Aberdeen by seventeen miles. This means the saving of about an hour on each journey, at the present rates of speed, and a corresponding saving in the communication with Dundee, Inverness, and other places in the north. To the Edinburgh people, however, who have hitherto had the tedious and uncomfortable passage of the Firth to make in steam-ferries, it means a great deal more, both in convenience and in economy of time.

Yet it must be confessed that the results do seem small for so much effort and outlay. And perhaps those critics are right who say that the bridge will never "pay." On the other hand, it is probable that the East Coast combined Railways do not expect it to pay in itself, but regard the work as actually imperative, in order to enable them to retain their fair share of the immense and increasing traffic of the far north.

These, however, are questions which, although interesting in themselves to almost everybody—for railways, whether as investments or as links in our internal communication, are undertakings of special concern to the whole community—do not call for further discussion here. Some reference to them was necessary to our subject, and that, whatever its commercial potentiality, is one of the mechanical wonders of the world. Even the Americans admit that they have nothing to beat it, and that the Eiffel Tower is "not a circumstance" to the Forth Bridge.

"BENEFIT OF CLERGY."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"Mary said you wanted me, uncle."

"Oh, yes; I sent her. Wait a moment, child. I must verify this before I close the book. His references are really most untrustworthy."

Lily climbed up, without saying a word, to the highest step of a library ladder which was near her, and having settled herself there, with an impatient twist of her little figure, she took a bit of string from her pocket and began to make various string puzzles.

The study was very dark, partly from a large guelder rose-tree which overshadowed the window, and partly because it was lined with books, the leather bindings of which, dulled with years and use, were darker in their general effect than the heaviest of oak wainscoting; and Lily made a curious, fascinating picture, as she sat there, in her light cotton frock, with a background of old brown commentaries on long-forgotten theological works to show up her small oval face, which was delicately coloured, under its brown tint, with a bright flush, and framed by a kind of rough aureole of very curly golden-brown hair—hair which was one of Lily's trials. It would not grow longer than a boy's, and it was altogether wrong with her complexion.

In the solitude of her chamber, she had once thought vaguely and darkly of such wicked vanities as dyes. However, frightened at the irrevocableness of the step, should she yield to that particular vanity, she went no further. Fortunately; for Lily was lovely. All the more lovely for the irregularity of her colouring.

She had come to the end of all available games with the string, when her uncle's voice made her look up, or rather, look down at him, quickly. But he was not speaking to her, not thinking of her.

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"Ah," he said, eagerly, "as I thought—wrong, quite wrong. He never should have undertaken an annotated edition like this. Some of his things are good—that pamphlet on the metres of Horace showed considerable clearheadedness — but these notes are far too slight and cursory, and the references are faulty. I must call public attention to their defects; a work like mine is greatly hindered by——"

Lily's string, rolled into a tiny ball, slipped from her fingers, as she gave it a final toss, and alighted on her uncle's writing-table. Lily's foot gave a short, impatient tap on the ladder.

"Dear me! What is that noise? And what is this? String! String! Most extraordinary! I don't understand it."

The Vicar's dim, short-sighted eyes peered about him, and suddenly fell on the incongruous spot of light in his dark little study, and its still more incongruous position.

"Lily! What on earth are you doing there? Oh, yes, yes, I remember. You are waiting, of course. Come down, child, come down, and find my glasses. And where did I put that letter? Oh, here they both are. Lily, this came this morning."

Lily was standing in front of her uncle's writing-table now, with her hands behind her like a child saying a lesson, and a mischievous look in her eyes, which rested for a moment on the letter. She did not say a word to break the pause he made, and he went on again, rather slowly:

"It is the third letter of the kind I have had to answer, since you came to me — the third within two months. It really becomes both embarrassing and annoying. Such a serious waste of my time, too. Who is this Mr. Mason? Where have you met him? But sit down; I wish to read you the contents of his letter."

"Oh, uncle, don't mind about that," Lily interposed, with a little twist of the corners of her mouth, which gave her face a curious expression, composed of a longing to laugh and a faint suggestion of consternation.

Mr. Heathcote put on his glasses, unfolded the letter very slowly, and began:

"DEAR SIR,—I write to ask you to allow me to call upon you, with a view to my obtaining your consent to my paying my addresses to your niece, Miss Heathcote. I venture to think I am not wholly indifferent to her, and she has it in her power to make me the happiest of men. If you would be good enough to appoint any day and hour at which it would be convenient for you to see me, I can, I believe, lay before you satisfactory details as to income, etc.

"Faithfully yours,

"G. H. MASON."

There was perfect silence in the little dark room when Mr. Heathcote finished. He himself was thinking what to say to Lily. It was so difficult to impress young minds, he found. But his thoughts were all scattered to the winds by a low laugh from the possessor of this particular young mind.

"Uncle, it's so ridiculous of the man," she said, at last. "I only—just talked to him."

"State your facts more clearly, Lily. I repeat my question. Where did you meet him?"

"Oh, he is Emily's cousin. I saw him at Ilfracombe last week, you know."

"You seem to have seen a good deal of him—to have encouraged him to hope, to say the least, Lily."

"I—oh—he wasn't quite so dull as every one else there, that's all, and I—of course, I—was glad; they're so stupid, there. He was rather nice; he got my hat one day when it went into the sea. It was my best one, and I was pleased with him, and I just—said so. Oh, how silly men are!"

"Lily, keep to the point. You wish me to tell this Mr. Mason——"

"That he is most foolish, uncle. As if one could care for a man like that! I've no patience with men."

The Vicar peered above his glasses at his niece's face with a very puzzled expression on his own.

"Well, well," he said, at last. "I don't understand young people of the present day. In my youth—not that I have any practical experience of my own to argue from—but, when I was young, I feel sure no man would have addressed such a letter to a young lady's guardian, unless she had given him very sufficient reason. And I cannot believe that you, Lily, could in that short space of time give a sufficient reason to three men. For that is what it amounts to. In May only, it was, surely, that I received that letter from Dr. Wilson—excellent young man—then—Lily, Lily, what are you doing?"

"I know just exactly what you're going to say, uncle, and I'm going."

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She shut the door after her with such a jerk that several engravings absolutely shook in their places.

"All dear James's impetuous ways!" sighed the Vicar to himself. "I wish she had waited a moment, though. I do not recall the young man I intended to refer to, and yet I know there was another. Oh, yes; asked me to give him a curacy. Ridiculous! How could I displace Smith or Maynard? Said he liked the place so much, should like to work under me, and then wrote about Lily. Hardly so sincere as he seemed, I fear, poor fellow! Really, Lily is a great charge. I had no idea of all this when I promised poor James that she should live here when she left school—not that I should have hesitated, but it is certainly both anxious and disturbing. I shall not finish that paragraph before I go to the school. Dear me! no; it is twenty minutes to three now, and I must write to this Mr. Mason before I go out. This is really a terrible waste of my time."

The Vicar set aside his cherished work—a "Commentary on the Fathers, with an Appendix on Gregory of Nyssa"—made his words to the injured Mr. Mason as gentle as possible, placed the letter in his capacious pocket, and five minutes later transferred it to the village post-office, which, in the parish of Sweet Ancott, was a tiny opening in the outside wall of the building containing the village shop. An opening so garlanded and surrounded by roses and honeysuckle, that it was absolutely necessary to push them on one side in order to post a letter there, an act which demanded much faith on the part of strangers, who found it difficult to believe that letters so posted ever reached any less rustic and poetic destination.

Then he went on his way; not rejoicing, for his school was a trial to the good man. His scheme of rustic education embraced the three Rs only; and the developement of these rudiments as inculcated by an enlightened Government did not appeal to his sympathies.

His ideas had received a shock from which they took long to rally, on the day when the village schoolmistress, in all the glory of a recent successful Government inspection, had made the children repeat to him that part of "King John" which had seemed to their "betters" of the Education Department eminently calculated to improve and enlarge the minds of the rustic rising generation. At the end of the most astonishing delivery of blank verse with which his ears had ever been assailed, comments failed him; words were wholly inadequate to his feelings. He took refuge, after a few moments' silence, in a cross-examination on the Tree of Knowledge and the Fall of Man.

After that experience—thinking that these dangerous tendencies, against which he was powerless to rebel, should, at least, have all the counteracting influence he could bring to bear—he made his former weekly visit to the Temple of Erudition daily ones.

On this afternoon he finished his lesson in peace, and came away. But one and another, on his way up the steep, straggling village street, called him eagerly into their houses, for his beloved commentary did not absorb quite all his thoughts. Those dim, short-sighted eyes could shine with sympathy when necessary, and the claims of Gregory of Nyssa could go into the background before the claims of many a struggling, patient man and woman. So it was nearly six o'clock before he came within sight of his own gates.

He had just reached them when he saw before him one of his young women parishioners. They were a trial even greater than the school. Their curtseys had grown small by degrees and beautifully less, till they curtseyed no longer, but bowed to him with an inclination so dignified that the good man did not always recognise the girls he had held in his arms in their infancy, and more than once had taken off his hat to them—or, their dresses. Their dresses were another grief to him in their brilliant hues, arranged in the latest fashion, or what was understood as such by the time that mysterious entity had found its way from its birthplace to Sweet Ancott.

To this particular girl he had given many a word of fatherly exhortation on the subject of dress; but his words had, apparently, not sunk deep into the heart of Jennie Brown, whose garments at that moment were wonderful and startling indeed.

Tenderly, wisely, and gently, he flattered himself, he approached his subject now. Jennie was certainly growing impressed by his theories of what quiet, womanly dress and behaviour should be, when, suddenly, the Vicar felt that he had lost her attention completely, and, looking up, saw before him, walking towards home with short, rapid steps, Lily—Lily, clad in the brightest of scarlet cotton gowns, her hat set on the back of her rough, tossed

hair, her fishing-rod over her shoulder, and beside her, struggling with the weight of a heavy basket of trout, the junior curate, Mr. Maynard, untidy, dishevelled, his soft felt hat dented all over, and his hands very dirty from winding up Lily's line.

Jennie Brown departed abruptly. Lily seized the Vicar's arm with both her hands and exclaimed:

"Oh, uncle, don't you want some trout for supper? Mr. Maynard caught only two of these, I caught the rest, and they're beauties. He's coming to supper, too."

"I doubt if Mr. Maynard has time," said the Vicar, in a mild, but distinctly crushing manner; "the library opens at seven, and I think Mr. Smith is at Esdale."

Mr. Maynard looked rather more dishevelled, more dented, more untidy, and said, in a subdued voice:

"Certainly, sir; I am going to the library at once. Good night, Miss Heathcote."

Lily seized the basket of trout, and flew into the house. The Vicar followed slowly, perplexed, anxious, wondering. Maynard—Maynard, who had been so hard-working, so energetic in the parish always—Maynard wasting a whole afternoon like this!

Mr. Heathcote began to think of it all carefully. Every day, on his return from the school, he usually met Mr. Smith or Mr. Maynard in the village engaged in some sort of parish business. But now, he remembered, slowly, that he had very seldom done so lately; and though he had, of course, seen them in their places in church and at meetings, he had seen little of either of them incidentally for weeks past. And he had himself, two days before, paid a pastoral visit to the distant, outlying hamlets of his parish. He had thought of her words as chronic discontent when a very grumbling denizen of those regions had told him, "We ain't seen none of the parsons here lately." But now, as he remembered, he thought they might be true.

Dimly these, and one or two other smaller details began to dawn on the Vicar; dimly and faintly he began to perceive that this diminution of energy had occurred only since Easter—that, in fact, it coincided more or less with Lily's arrival at Sweet Ancott in April.

The good man's head went round at this discovery, and he stood quite still in the middle of his gravel drive to try and think it over.

If he had thought of Lily at all when he was not actually with her, he had thought of her vaguely as sewing, playing the piano, or as doing "something women do," said he to himself, almost piteously. "But apparently she has been making mischief everywhere. Only to-day—only to-day I wrote to tell that unfortunate man that her careless thoughtlessness had led him into a mistake! And now, here is Maynard's time wasted, and his head turned, probably. Smith's, too, for all I know. Well, certainly, this won't do. I must speak to Lily very seriously—far more seriously than I have ever yet been called upon to speak to her of anything."

With this resolve fresh in his mind, the Vicar hastily extricated his stick from the hole in the gravel into which he had inserted it in his agitation of mind, and went on his way to the drawing-room, thinking vaguely that, at any rate, that was the spot in which he ought to seek Lily.

She was there. She had taken her spoils to the kitchen, and was sitting peacefully on the broad window-sill, behind the curtain, reading.

"Lily, my dear child," began the Vicar very solemnly, from the further end of the room.

There was no answer. He came a few steps further, and went on:

"Lily, give me your careful attention for a few moments. Lay your book aside. I wish to speak to you on a grave matter. I cannot express to you my feelings when I discovered, just now, that Mr. Maynard's time had been wasted thus. Before I go further, I must really request that you never accompany him——"

"He accompanied me," Lily put in.

"That you do not go out with him again. Setting aside the waste of time, it is altogether unseemly that you should do so. I must ask for your promise, Lily, that this does not occur again."

There was no answer.

"Lily?" the Vicar repeated; but still she did not speak.

There was a slight movement somewhere; but no words came. The Vicar waited an instant, then he walked up to the window and pulled the curtain aside.

No Lily was there. Down on the lawn below stood a small scarlet figure, panting with the jump down, and holding up a laughing face. After one or two exaggerated gasps for breath, Lily said, looking up at him, saucily:

"I don't want to waste your time,

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uncle, in talking; but it's no good for me to promise. I might want Mr. Maynard again, you know. He's very strong, and carries the basket much better than Harry Blake."

With that the scarlet figure raced down the lawn and out of sight. The poor Vicar turned back into the drawing-room utterly at a loss; except for one resolve, which took the clearest and most determined form in his mind: namely, that he would find for both curates plenty of work through all the next day, and for many a day to come.

With that end in view he sallied forth early next morning; and having laid his commands on Mr. Maynard, and, indeed, seen him start for the furthest houses in the furthest hamlets to look up truant children, he then proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. Smith, for whom he had arranged an equally engrossing mission. He knocked for some time at the door without receiving any answer, and when the landlady at last appeared, all the information he could gain from her was that Mr. Smith was "out."

"Went out at half-past ten, and never said nothing about his dinner," concluded the much-injured woman.

It is always dangerous to judge from appearances; but to do so in her case would inevitably have led to the inference that it was almost a farce for Mr. Smith to mention the meal in question, so incapable did she look of thinking of dinner, much less of cooking it.

The Vicar ignored that delinquency on the part of his curate, and simply said that he would go up to Mr. Smith's room and write him a note. He ascended the narrow stairs and opened the door of that sanctum. From the mass of litter, clerical and otherwise, upon the table, he extricated writing-materials and sat down.

Something fell out of the blotting-case as he opened it, something that fluttered to the ground. He picked it up carefully. It was a note in a small, square envelope.

Surely he knew the dashing handwriting, which nearly covered the limited surface; the enormous capital R of Reverend was familiar enough. It was — yes, it was, most certainly, a note from Lily to Mr. Smith.

The Vicar looked aghast, indeed, as he laid it down on the table. Decidedly he had not taken the matter in hand a day too soon. Taking up a pen, he wrote his note quickly, making it shorter, sterner, and more peremptory than any note from him to his curate had ever been before. Fastening it up, he laid it in a conspicuous position on the closed blotting-case, and then turned round to see what time it was by the mantelpiece clock, before he rose to go. But there was something propped up against it, so that he could only see the minute-hand—some dark object or other. He got up, and went towards the mantelpiece to remove it; but not until he actually stretched out his hand to take it, did his short-sighted eyes see what it was. Then he saw too clearly, too well. It was a photograph of Lily—Lily herself! The same that graced his own drawing-room table!

"Bless my soul!" cried the agitated Vicar. "Can she have given it him? What are things coming to? To think—to think that I never dreamt of this! I must hurry out and look for Smith, at once. He must be somewhere. And then; but dear me, dear me, what can I say to Lily?"

But Smith was, apparently, nowhere. Every haunt the Vicar tried knew him not. Not even the aid of various zealous urchins set free from school, and only too willing to help "Muster Heathcote find the tall 'un," as Mr. Smith was familiarly known, could produce him.

With a vexatious sense of failure and worry, the Vicar was fain, at twenty minutes to one, to seek his own mansion for luncheon. As he strolled, hot and tired, up the drive, a faint sound of voices fell on his ears from the thicket of rhododendrons on his right. Voices, no; it was one voice—a rather monotonous one. Mr. Heathcote stood still for a moment to listen. Then he pushed aside the rhododendrons hastily and went through. Half-a-dozen paces brought him to two great ash-trees. They were very thick, and a tiny murmuring brook ran close beside them, making that part of the garden cool even on the hottest days. But the sight that met the Vicar's eyes at this moment took away from him all thought of cool, rest, or calm.

In her hammock between the two ash-trees, swinging slowly, lay Lily; on a low branch of one of the trees sat Mr. Smith, reading aloud. Between them was a table with tumblers and lemon-squash.

Both became aware of the Vicar's presence at the same instant. Mr. Smith started and let his book fall. Lily looked up and said, slowly:

"Why, uncle, how hot you look! Why

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don't you come and sit here? Mr. Smith is reading me the 'Children of Gibeon.' It's much too hot to read to myself, and it's good practice for him. I think he reads very badly in church, don't you? I've told him so—— Oh, is it lunch-time?" as the Vicar said, with a sort of gasp:

"Smith, there's a note at your rooms from me; Lily, it is one o'clock," and strode indoors forthwith.

WILFUL WASTE.

THAT "wilful waste makes woeful want," is an old tried proverb; and equally true it is that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." Yet, as if we were a nation of fools, we English are going dead against both. Take the latter first. There's the strike, which has cost the dock companies they say two millions, besides what it has cost every family among the strikers. But, worse than this, because less notorious, is the yearly loss, through the want of patriotism of our workers. The Wholesale Co-operative Societies, whose head-quarters are in Manchester, thrive exceedingly. Their yearly sales in England alone—and they have branches in Scotland—amount to nearly six millions, of which three-fourths are for provisions. Yet of this they spend a million and a half on foreign produce. Their buyers go to Denmark, Germany, America, everywhere, for what, with a little management, might be produced better, and more cheaply, at home. There's the rub—the little management. Who is to give it? The foundry-man can't be expected to, nor the mill-hand, nor the miner. He has enough to do to make his Co-operative Society a success. A success many of them are. Last year a meeting of delegates from several co-operative societies declared so large an unused balance that they carried a resolution to start a cheese-factory in America, so as to get their cheese without the middleman. It was only by great persuasion, and after a regular outcry in the local papers, that they were persuaded to compromise, and to found their factory in Canada, instead of in the States. Here was want of patriotism with a vengeance. Thousands of English acres going out of cultivation; landlords taking to game-breeding as a business, because tenants can't be had at any rent; tenants stinting the land of the needful labour, so that in "high-farming counties" you find fields of thistles and ragwort, such as you look for in the worst parts of Ireland; and poor Hodge, for lack of employment, swarming into the already over-full country towns, or making his way to unhealthy Queensland, the only colony that will assist his passage. All this; and yet the "artisan capitalist" goes abroad for his cheese and butter and butcher's-meat, forgetting that, though he gains just now perhaps a penny in the pound by so doing, he stands to lose ten times more than that in the near future, because every guinea that he spends abroad diminishes labourer's, farmer's, aye, land-lord's, power of purchasing what he makes; and must soon, therefore, circumscribe his market.

No doubt, at bottom, the fault is with the farmer. It is just the case of the Co-operative Stores over again. If the London shopkeepers had listened to reason, the Stores would never have been started. But, despite all warnings, the urban and suburban retailers would keep up the old credit prices. And now more than half their custom is gone; and, alas, their stubbornness has half-ruined the country shopkeeper, who can't help charging a little more than "My Lady," or the parson's or doctor's wife gives at the Stores, and without whom country life would be at a standstill, seeing that two-thirds of the labourers in the parish are in his debt. So the farmer has been content that English corn, and even English meat, and butter, and cheese, should be beaten out of the market in our great manufacturing centres by the greater cheapness of the foreign article; and yet, strangest thing of all, the farmer did not get after all the high prices that English articles used to command. He has been, all round, the dupe of the middlemen: of miller and corn-factor, of grazier and butcher. What the co-operative artisans should have done—had their wisdom and their patriotism been equal to their faculty for making bargains—is to have put pressure on the farmers. "We mean to have our meat at the American price," they should have said; "and we are sure that, with proper management you can afford to sell it to us as cheap as they do." So he could, as Mr. Tallerman, famous for tinned meat, magnanimously explains in his book on "Agricultural Distress." The secret is, for farmers to combine and slaughter their beasts themselves, instead of having to "sink the offal," and thereby lose at least a fifth of the value.

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It seems simple enough; the difficulty is how to get it done. The farmers, seemingly, cannot combine. A few did open a little store in London; but the thing must be taken in hand at a dozen centres, and there you must have proper cattle lairs and slaughter-houses, such as those at Barrow-in-Furness.

Paris owed to the first Napoleon the suppression of private slaughter-houses and the setting up of five "abattoirs"—just lately concentrated into one, in which nothing is lost, and everything is utilised at once.

Under our system, the farmer sells a whole live beast to the dealer at the price which it is supposed its two sides will weigh after killing; all the rest he has to throw in gratis. The butcher loses, too, for he has to buy the whole beast, when, perhaps, his class of customers only take prime joints, when, at any rate, he has no use for horns, and hide, and fat, and tripe.

Who does not know what a wretchedly foul place a country butcher's slaughter-house usually is, and what waste goes on there, from the blood, which has many uses, to the fat, which regraters buy up—often after it has got quite stale—and export to Holland at twopence a pound, whence it comes back to us as margarine, and is sold for eightpence? That is the mischief. At all our multitudinous little slaughter-houses things wait about till they are more than half spoiled. This makes the difference between the vile, leathery garbage, called tripe, which you see dished up in frowsy little shops in the dreary back streets of our big towns, and the appetising "tripe de Caen," a staple Parisian dainty. Go over an "abattoir," and note how everything is cleansed and prepared and made the most of at once; and then watch a Northern railway, bringing to some Lancashire town, its morning load of bullocks' paunches, gathered from half a hundred slaughter-houses. They have been emptied? Yes; and that's all. They are lying in filth; the stench from them is enough to make you abjure tripe for all the rest of your days.

Here is waste at both ends. The farmer loses, Mr. Tallerman calculates, nearly three pounds sterling on every beast he sells, making a total of more than five millions—that is, nearly the cost of all the meat that we import—on all the cattle sent to market. He, poor man, cannot recoup himself, except by standing out for yet more reduction in rent, and by employing even less labour than he now does. The butcher loses, too. He has to sell, for next to nothing, the inferior pieces to the East-Enders or Clare-Marketers, who display them in uninviting morsels under their flaring gas-lights, and tempt passing buyers with their monotonous chant of "Buy, buy; buy, buy." He, of course, rights himself by charging more for what he does sell; but the mischief remains, and is just this: so much produce is wasted, and no one profits but the salesman, whom we could all so well do without.

In America they do things as neatly and economically as in France. Pickled tripe, brawn, and half-a-dozen other tinned luxuries are the outcome of that "offal" which we leave till it gets half spoiled. You know the country proverb about the pig: "Not a bit of him is wasted." Why? because Hodge takes care of that. His rent-payer is killed under his own eyes. He does not "sink the offal." Neighbours, when they hear the well-known squeal, compete with one another for this "offal." And when the parson's pig is killed, his cook makes up half-a-dozen dishes of "meat," which go to the maimed or the widows.

The farmer is at another disadvantage. His beasts generally have to make a journey which lessens both weight and quality. Knowing men, like Professor Gamgee, calculate the loss at eight pounds a day on a quiet road—that is, in five days forty pounds of the best meat; while on the rail from Aberdeen to London the loss is five per cent. of the gross weight. And it is not the bones, and horns, and hoofs, and sinews that shrink, but the nourishing parts. To a well-fed bullock, nursed in its stall like a baby in the cradle, sheltered from fierce sun, jealously guarded from noises of all kinds, the journey to the cattle-market must be the worst of torments. The hooting and howling, the thirst caused by fright; no wonder Scotch-killed beef brings, as a rule, twopence a stone—that is, a farthing a pound—more in the Central Meat Market than the same beef killed in London. The Irish beasts have the worst time of all. Have you ever travelled across in a cattle-steamer, and seen the poor things in a gale?—a struggling mass of horns, and tails, and undulating backs, along which "Jack," when a rope wants hauling in, runs as nimbly as if he was on the main deck. Things are so bad—the bruised state of the beasts when they arrive makes the meat so unsatisfactory — that early this year

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meetings of dealers were held at Glasgow and Liverpool, and the Lord Lieutenant was memorialised on the subject. But cattle still land in the larger island often twenty and thirty per cent. worse than when they left the smaller one. Buyers secure themselves by paying ten per cent. less for Irish beasts. The only way, says Mr. Tallerman, is for the Irish to kill their own cattle, and send the meat over in refrigerators. The farmer will then be able to pay a better rent, for he will get the worth of his beast; and many industries — tanning, boot-making, etc.—which once throve in Ireland, will have a chance of reviving.

Of all "Irish ideas," the most ridiculous is that they, with the best pastures in the world—in Limerick and Tipperary—should send over their lean stock instead of fattening it themselves. The whole plan is ruinous. At the worst of the bad time, when "horn" was down as low as "corn" —instead of one being up, as used to be in the old days—I have known "lean Irish stock," which had tramped right across England, sold in a little Norfolk town for less than it had cost to bring them there. Even in the hottest weather, the freezing-chamber, properly managed, is a complete safeguard.

What is the use of living on the verge of the twentieth century, when farmers still do as they used to do in Charles the Second's time? The worst of Irish tyrants is the "salesmaster." He fiercely opposes every move in the right direction, because he lives, and buys land, and sets up for a "jintleman intirely" on what he robs from the farmer. A notable case of this occurred lately in Dublin. The Corporation erected on the city boundary excellent abattoirs. Unfortunately, they are just outside it, instead of inside; therefore, the butchers refuse to use them, and cannot be compelled to do so, because the bye-laws do not extend an inch beyond the boundary line. Vested interests, and those of very modern growth, are at least as strong in London as in Dublin. Not long ago an Essex, or Surrey, or Middlesex farmer could bring up his meat and sell it himself, his wife coming with him and bringing her poultry or butter. Now everything must be done through a salesman. The Corporation has actually leased all the shops in the Central Meat Market to dealers, to the virtual exclusion of the producers or their agents. These "Bummarees," as they are called, who number a hundred and fifty-four in the Meat Market, and fifty-six in the Poultry Market, get little or no meat from the farmers direct, but are mostly carcase-butchers, who buy live stock at Islington, slaughter it, and then sell at the Central. Their minimum commission is two and a half per cent.; and the value of last year's sales having exceeded fourteen and a half millions, this amounts to over three hundred and sixty thousand pounds, of which the producer is mulcted, the other gains of the dealers making the sum up to at least a million sterling—a large sum for the struggling meat-grower to lose in only one of the many departments which come between him and the consumer. Nor have consumers any freer access to the Central Market than producers. Except on Saturday afternoons, when there is a lot of deteriorated meat to be got rid of, and when some of "the two hundred and ten" deign to sublet their stands, the public are strictly shut out. And yet the "Central" was meant to be a market, that is, a place set apart for public convenience, the tolls from which should be just enough to keep it in decent order. You try to sell your nice little pigs, just proper London weight, and not too fat. I tried once, and what with commission and expenses, I found I got about two pence a stone less than I could have sold them for in the village. There are too many middlemen, and they make too good a thing of it. They are as bad as the regraters, against whom our grandfathers used to rail when corn was dear. "Live and let live" is a good motto; but these fellows live so well that the farmer goes bankrupt, and the public has to pay more than a fair price; and the amount of waste, over and above the money loss, is enough to make farming pay, instead of being a losing game, if the farmer could get it. What is to be done? The "agricultural interest" has to be considered. If we ruin the farmer, we ruin Hodge along with him; and a country that depends on the foreigner for its food supply is, even in these days of steam, in a bad way. Besides, you must pay for your imported food; and every year the manufacturing competition becomes keener, and the protection, against us Quixotic free-traders, more rigorous. Mr. Tallerman's plan is virtual Protection without Act of Parliament. To the buyers he says:

"You spend thirty-four millions on food. You have every right to do the best for yourselves—to buy in the cheapest market.

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I don't want you to give a penny more for a thing because it's English grown, unless it's plainly seen to be a penny better. All I say is, look at home, and see if, by putting pressure on the right people, by squeezing out the middleman, or at least by giving him rather less free play than he now has, you cannot get things here cheaper than you can abroad. Take your time; consider well; for, if you go on as you're going, you'll just deprive labourer and farmer and landlord of their 'purchasing power;' and they, you know, are after all your best customers."

To the farmers he says:

"What a strange thing it is that your fathers made money when the price of stock was low, while you were losing during all those golden years when it was high. I know: the rinderpest, and foot-and-mouth disease, and such like, partly due to your own mania for overfeeding. Really prime beasts are sadly few compared with the population; and inferior qualities you are forced to 'sell for anything' now so much comes in from abroad. Well, what you have got to do is to grow the best of meat, and combine so as to get it killed for you instead of 'sinking the offal.' Moreover, let each butcher buy just what he wants. Some will buy only prime joints; some, all sorts. But each, not having to buy what he doesn't want, will be able to give more for what he does. Use up your tripe and such like while it is good. Do not send it a long journey to get half spoiled and then made unwholesome by being set right again with chemicals. Make your own margarine; do not let the Dutch do it, at a loss to the British nation of sixpence per pound. And did you never hear of what the Yankees call 'small goods'—sausages, collared head, dressed beef? Out of every animal you can, if you work while it is fresh, make a hundred and fifty pounds of these things, and can then well afford to sell them at half what they cost in American or Australian tins."

But all this, of course, means co-operation, that is, working together. In every district the farmers must set up something like what has been started at Barrow, the big new town—mostly due to one man's enterprise, as Fleetwood was to Mr. Whitworth's—which has grown up near the ruins of famous old Furness abbey. And in many districts tinning will be needless; there will be a demand for "small goods" as fast as they are made.

Children's dinners, too, have become an educational fact. In some places, half-a-dozen societies are providing them free, or under cost price. These must combine. Why not? There will be fewer secretaries, one "staff" instead of half-a-dozen, that is, less subscription money spent in salaries. If they combine and deal first-hand with the local farmers' abattoir, we may say, Q. E. F., as Euclid does, "what was required is done;" everything will come right for everybody. The "made goods" will be taken up at once, the marbled fat and lean pieces, minced with rice or lentils, will make the most appetising of dishes. The farmer will get a good price for all he now "sinks" into the dealer's pocket, and the poor, little, undeveloped town child will grow up into something like what an English child ought to be; aye, and an Irish child, too. For Ireland suffers far worse than England from the present system.

I pay a shilling a pound for the best Limerick ham. It is as good as the world can produce; and I bless Messrs. Matheson for so bravely keeping up the trade begun by Mr. Russell, the Cumberland man, who took his energy to Ireland. But I can well understand Pat cursing the Saxon when, judging by what he gets out of the bargain, he fancies I only pay sevenpence instead of a shilling. The conditions of the problem are these: Ireland is a food-producing country; the Irish farmer has for some time been getting ruinously low prices, and he has laid the fault on the English purchaser, whereas the real sinner is the middleman, whether grazier or salesmaster. Let Ireland kill her own beasts, and send over the best joints in cool chambers, using up the small goods "to feed her own sadly underfed people," and then two good results will be attained: less political "gas" of an explosive character will be let loose in the sister isle, and less whisky—for which an empty stomach acquires a craving—will be drunk.

There is sense in all this; and, seeing the yearly meat-crop brings in seventy millions to the salesmen, and to the butcher nearly ninety millions—is, in fact, far the richest of our crops — it is worth the farmer's while to see if he cannot manage to live by all this outlay. He must be a farmer of the new and improved kind, not one who is chiefly intent on himself laying on flesh, as if to illustrate the proverb, "who feeds fat oxen should himself be fat." Not a man who is content to sit for

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hours after his dinner at the "ordinary," smoking a "churchwarden," soaking in strong liquors, and dropping now and then a solemn word of little meaning; but quick-eyed, restless, all agog for new improvements. Such men will find that farming still pays if common sense is allowed a voice in the arrangements. And as soon as the farmers have found that out, they will be able to meet the purchaser more than half-way, and to prove to him that he need not go abroad for what he can get as cheap, and much better, at home. Farmers have been slow to recognise that—now we have ocean steamers, and freezing-chambers, and all that—the old "take it, or leave it; you'll get nothing else" plan is out of date. They must "meet the times," like other people.

Look at butter. London and the big towns used to be thankful for anything they could get—"Welsh pail," "Cork barrel," "Clonmel firkin," "Dorset" from a dozen English counties; all unequal—often, especially in the English butters, a layer of sour among the sweet; all in heavy casks which had a dirty look, no matter how really clean they might be. Now that we can get Danish in its neat, little white barrels, Brittany in its dainty baskets, etc., the farmer has had to give in, and to mind his churning, and to start creameries whereby an even quality of butter is ensured.

Had he done this with flour, the corn-lands of Essex would not now be lying untilled, or let for a nominal rent. I saw in Belfast a score of carts distributing to the bakers small bags of American flour. "Yes," said my friend, "that's how we're ruined. We don't say, 'Keep out foreign wheat,' but we do say, 'Keep out the foreign-manufactured article.' We lose every way. They get the bran, which ought to help feed our stock." And Ireland is full of big corn-mills falling to ruin, which might have been busily at work, had the Irish farmer taken the trouble not only to get his corn ground, but to send it out in small bags to suit the needs of customers. It is an axiom that, "the smaller are your packages, the less need of middlemen to distribute them." This holds of meat, as well as of wheat.

No doubt about it—Mr. Tallerman's scheme would make the farmer an independent man instead of being the slave of his miller and his banker. It would enable the artisan to feed himself and his children with really nourishing food at less than the red herring and "scrag end" of meat now costs. Above all, it would prevent that waste which makes everything dearer without doing anybody any good. And it may be done, if only farmers will combine; and if a capitalist here and there will give them a start. We send our money out to South American mines, to Brazilian tramways, to ventures everywhere, while there is this plain call to keep money, and thereby to keep production, more within the four corners of the United Kingdom.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IV.

MISS GARTH, herself, slept beautifully. She rose the next morning prettier than ever, so Aston thought, when she greeted him at breakfast time.

After lunch, he took her round the garden. Near the mills was a slight, wooden bridge, consisting of a plank and a railing, spanning the river. She went on it, to look down at the water, as it came foaming and eddying from the churning of the great water-wheel. These wheels—with their mystery of silent strength, their dark suggestions of sucking currents, their treachery of tortured waters falling sullenly from the slime-stained bars of the great wheel which had caught them and ground them into raging foam, only waiting in their turn, for some victim to batter and bruise out of all shape, in revenge for their own torture—had a deep fascination for her.

"I don't exactly know why they interest me," she said, resting her hand on the slight rail and looking down at the swirling, seething waters, while the roar of the great wheel filled her ears. "They remind me somehow of fate. Like the water we go hurrying along, only to be caught by that relentless wheel, which churns for a little all our life into fear and dread, and then flings us off to take up our own course again, and get along as best we can. I always wonder if the water ever feels quite the same again."

"Probably not," he said, looking towards the great wheel too.

"And then, they always remind me of ghosts"—a laugh taking the place of the

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dreaming tone. "Have you a ghost in this mill?"

"We have two," he replied, with much gravity.

"Oh, that's a pity! Who could respect two ghosts? You really ought to have got rid of one at least."

Something curious came into his eyes. Something so sad, so hopeless, that it startled her; but as she looked it was gone. He turned away with a laugh that sounded natural enough.

"I am glad you don't approve of divided allegiance. One ghost is quite enough for any respectable family."

"Do tell me their stories," she exclaimed.

"It's the usual thing: boots upon the stairs, and gliding white forms," he returned lightly, having reasons of his own for not entering into details. "How do you like Riverbridge?"

"Oh, very much!" with womanly determination to ask Miss Ross all about the ghosts at once. "It is the sleepiest, funniest, old place I ever saw. Miss Ross introduced me to several people who——"

"Are the sleepiest, funniest people."

"Never try to finish a sentence for any one—least of all a girl," she said, laughing. "I was certainly not going to call them 'sleepy,'" having a very vivid recollection of the way Riverbridge had taken her in generally. She felt certain that not a ribbon of her dress, not a flaw in her complexion, had escaped notice. "There was one dear old gentleman, who said the prettiest speeches to me in the world; but then, he was a doctor, so I am afraid they don't count."

"Dr. Copland?" said Aston, a sudden sense of discomfiture again touching him as she spoke of Copland as a "dear old gentleman." Copland was only a few years older than himself. But he recovered himself, and felt he would soon be able to accept the position unmoved. He had grown so accustomed to being the eligible bachelor of the place, suitable, apparently, in the Riverbridge opinion, for the age of any girl, from sixteen upwards, that he had quite forgotten, till she showed him, with such frank, uncompromising truth, that age was already on him.

Miss Garth had numerous visitors that afternoon. The society of Riverbridge was eager to do its duty. It was delighted at any change or excitement, trifling as it might be, and was only too pleased to call on Mr. Aston's ward. Nearly all those who had heard of her earlier arrival came; and Miss Ross and she had quite a levée. The society was provincial in the extreme; but it was very civil, and even embarrassingly imbued with a sense of her superior position. But when she came to analyse it, as she changed her dress for dinner, this admiration all seemed to rise not from herself as being herself, but as being the ward of Mr. Aston on the Bridge.

"I suppose Mr. Aston is a great deal thought of in the place," she said, reflectively, to Miss Ross, as they sat working after dinner, while Aston smoked his pipe in the dining-room.

"Oh yes; I should think so. He is one of the most respected men in the place. Everybody likes to get his advice. If anything is going to be done—whether it is to put up railings round a well, or build a wing to the Infirmary—everybody follows Brend's lead. He's been here a long time, too, you see—twenty years; and the life he has led, so upright and industrious, has made him honoured by every one."

"And now I want to hear about the ghosts."

But Miss Ross refused to tell their stories.

"It makes Brend so angry. He says it is all rubbish; and I promised him not to tell you anything about them."

Daisy laughed, and dropped the subject. But perhaps it still haunted her. For that night she could not sleep. Her mind was on the alert, with a curious, expectant excitement, which could neither have been analysed nor accounted for. When she did fall asleep at last, it was a strange, troubled sleep, through which ran all the time a sense of coming danger. Suddenly she awoke—actively, broadly awake—and sat up, her eyes straining themselves into the darkness, her ears sharpened to hear the faintest sound that could break the deathlike stillness of the night. She was waiting for something. She felt it in her whole being. The coming of that invisible, pursuing danger which had followed her through her dreams into waking life.

Ah! it had come.

Slowly, wearily, heavily — each step a protest against, and yet full all the time, of a dreadful despair of the fate that was driving them on—came the sound of feet on the staircase. Her ears, strained till they would have heard a pin fall, caught the sound of them as they passed up from the lowest stair. They

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mounted slowly, each footfall beating out in the silence of the night that dreadful protest against the power driving them.

Up, up. They had reached the lower landing which divided the staircase, one flight branching off to the back of the house, the other mounting to the front, where her room lay. Were they coming her way?

Yes! Up! Still up!

To what dreadful shape did they belong? The cold drops of moisture gathered on her brow; every atom of colour faded from her parted lips; her heart beat in heavy, irregular blows.

Ah! Heavens! Would no one stop those dreadful feet? They were there! At the head of the staircase now. They would cross the landing. Oh, if they should come and find her there alone—alone!

A stifled, inarticulate cry broke from her lips. She sprang out of bed. There was no sound now. No. Because they were creeping — creeping towards her. With one wild scream she dashed at the door, and, tearing it open, ran out on to the landing. There was just a pale glimmering of moonshine falling through the window. Otherwise, the landing was dark and empty. Only for a second. The door facing her at the other side of the landing opened. Aston, still dressed, appeared on the threshold. He had heard the scream.

"Good heavens!" he cried, as the slender, white-robed figure ran with outstretched hands into the faint, pale moonlight. "What is it?"

"Oh, save me! Save me!" And then with one stride he was at her side, and had caught her as she fell fainting into his arms.

CHAPTER V.

"It's the most extraordinary thing I ever did in my life!"

Miss Garth, sitting up in bed, eating her breakfast, next morning, looked up at Miss Ross, who was standing by her, with eyes in which wonder, vexation, shame, and a faint lingering of superstitious dread, mingled.

"I'm always dreadfully frightened of ghosts. At least, I should be if I met one; but what possessed me to get into such a mad fright about those steps, last night, I can't think!"

"And it was only Brend coming up to his room," Miss Ross said, with a laugh; but she looked a little curiously at the girl, as if she, too, wondered what could possibly have disturbed her so.

Miss Garth flushed scarlet.

"He must think me a dreadful little fool," she said, stirring the cream into her tea.

"No, he doesn't. He's very unhappy about your having such a fright. He sat up later than usual last night. I wish he wouldn't do it. He doesn't take half enough rest. But, sometimes, he can't sleep, when he gets one of those moods on."

"What moods?"

"Oh, it's his liver," said Miss Ross, cheerfully, sitting down by the bedside. "I know what that is. It takes you all sorts of ways. And his way is this gloomy sort of fit, and an impossibility to sleep. No one knows what I suffer with mine, too; but I never say anything about it."

Miss Garth, slowly crumbling a piece of toast, was too absent-minded to sympathise.

"But it was odd," she said, abruptly, looking up with grave, questioning eyes. "Why should I have been so terrified? I can't describe what I felt. Once before, while I was undressing, I thought I heard a stealthy step outside my door; but when I listened, there was nothing—and——"

"Of course, that was it," said Miss Ross, hurriedly; "you remembered that in your dreams, and——"

"Oh yes!" impatiently. "I have thought of all that. But even that doesn't account for my fear. It was very ridiculous; but I was afraid. Oh, so afraid!"

And an involuntary shiver moved her.

"My dear Daisy, eat your breakfast."

"I really do believe there was something in it," not paying any attention to the entreaty. Then, with a little half-shamed laugh, "Was it anything to do with your ghost, do you think? Do tell me the story."

And Daisy was so coaxing, so pleading, that Miss Ross finally yielded on the condition that she ate her breakfast.

"There is rather a funny thing about it," she said, really enjoying the prospect of telling the story, in spite of Aston's disapproval. "The ghost is never seen—at least in the house; but it is always heard. There is a noise as if some one were walking up the stairs: heavy, dragging footsteps, as if the person coming up were very weary. It was really very curious your fancying all those things about Brend's footsteps last night."

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"Very," with a slight shiver, which she hastily tried to hide by taking a mouthful of toast. Though every hour was lessening the effect of the night's fright, so terribly real had been the horror of those footsteps that, even this morning, she could not forget.

"It was Mr. Aston's great-grandfather who first bought this house. There were no mills then. The next Aston started them. He was a young man when he came here, and had one son, a little boy of two. They say his wife was rich, and that he had run away with her. She died soon after they came here, giving birth to another son. Mr. Aston became quite wrapped up in the two boys; but he was fondest of the youngest. He grew fonder of him every day, and, at last was often unjust to the elder boy. James, the elder, was always steady; but Anthony, as every one expected, turned out wild. He got so bad, that, at last, even his father could believe in him no more, and forbade him to come to the house.

"But he broke his heart over doing it, and died soon after. He was only about fifty. James came into the money, and built the mills, and grew richer. He never had had any patience with Anthony's wild doings, and now they quarrelled perpetually. James refused to help him, as he had promised his father, and one day they had a fearful quarrel, in which Anthony killed James. James hadn't been married quite a year then. The murder was never proved. They had been heard quarrelling while the market was going on at Fairburn —a place about ten miles from here. The next morning, James was found lying dead in a ditch between this and Fairburn. They did not tell the wife he had not come home that night, as they were afraid it might frighten her in her state of health. But strangely enough—of course, it was only her fancy—she had heard, during the night, the sound of steps coming upstairs —heavy, weary steps. She thought it was her husband, and that, because he was late, he did not come in to see her. She had been very ill, and her mother was sleeping in the room with her. Her mother heard nothing; but in the morning the wife remarked on the lateness of the hour on which James returned, and also added that he walked as if he had been very tired. The mother went to see if he had come in after all. But the room was empty. An hour or two later they brought the news of his death. His son was born the next day, and the poor mother died. They had not been able to keep the news from her. The shock killed her. Anthony was tried for the murder, but acquitted for want of evidence. He took to drinking more wildly than ever, and one day disappeared, and no one ever saw or heard of him again. His uncle looked after the mills till James's son, Stephen, was old enough to manage them himself. He married, and had two sons, but they both died; and at his death he left the mills and house to Brend, who was only a distant connection."

"But the ghosts?"

"Well, they do say that, ever since James Aston's death, those steps are still heard sometimes on the stairs; but nothing has ever been seen."

"Have you ever heard them?"

"I? No! But some people declare they have; and, it is a funny thing, they are always heard before some misfortune comes to the house. At least, so they say."

"I am sorry I heard them!"

"What nonsense! You heard Brend—— Besides, the business is very flourishing, and Brend is in very good health, except his rheumatism; and, of course, he isn't as young as he was."

"Well, I don't think I could bring him misfortune, do you?" asked the girl, laughing, the superstitious fear vanishing. "I dare say I shall be a bother."

"You won't be a bother," said Miss Ross, looking at her a little oddly, and thinking how wonderfully pretty she was.

"But the other ghost?"

"Oh, that's not a pleasant story. It was a poor, miserable girl. All the more dreadful because James was supposed to be so good. The poor creature came here the night after he was murdered, and flung herself off that wooden bridge, just in front of the mills. They say that when James's feet are heard in the house, she is always to be seen on the bridge; and that she comes to try and meet him. It was a wild winter night, and the river was swollen, and her body was found two days later, a good distance down the bank. No one till then knew anything about it, and every one was dreadfully shocked. The mother came to Riverbridge the day she was found to look after her, as she had disappeared from home a few days before. The mother told everything; but she said the girl had always declared that James

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had married her. They lived a long way from here. It seems as if she had come to look after James, and that then, for the first time, found out that he had a wife. That, and the fact of his murder, I suppose, happening all at once, turned her brain, and she drowned herself. Of course, the story of the marriage was ridiculous. If it had been true, she would have, according to the girl's mother, been married to James before he married his real wife."

"Then the last would not have been his wife at all?"

"No. And Stephen would not have inherited the property, for his father died without a will. But, of course, it was all a cock-and-bull story, got up between that poor, wretched girl and her mother. And James ought to have known better."

"Of course, if it had been true, Anthony Aston would have been able to claim the property instead of his nephew Stephen?"

"It was a good thing he couldn't. He was a good-for-nothing."

"I know an Anthony," said Daisy, with thoughtful irrelevance, while her eyes seemed to grow prettier with a kind of dreamy sweetness. "He was a friend of ours in Australia, and he has been staying in Germany during the last two years."

The change of conversation was rather a relief to Miss Ross, for she was beginning to remember that Brend could be very unpleasant if disobeyed, and it was a good thing Daisy's thoughts had drifted to another subject than the Bridge House ghosts. It was a gruesome idea, that of the drowned girl always returning to wait for the steps of her false lover; and as Daisy was so very fanciful she might have more frights if she dwelt too much on it.

CHAPTER VI.

DAISY GARTH had been nearly two months in Riverbridge. She had arrived in the beginning of December, and it was now the end of January.

Miss Ross performed her offices of chaperon and companion with kindly tact, and was always ready to fling herself in the breaches which occasionally opened between Brend Aston and his ward. For, sometimes, the girl, seized apparently with a mischievous provoking spirit, would attack him with a bright audacity, defying his authority, mocking at his remonstrances, and often treating him more like a troublesome boy than a grave, elderly guardian, to whom respect was due.

Aston, under these moods, always grew cold and stern, and Miss Ross, fearing he was angry, would do her best to make matters straight between them again. Whether she really succeeded to the satisfaction of the others, she did not know. She always succeeded to her own, for no open rupture ever came between the two.

It was after one of these little explosions between guardian and ward—when the flash and the retort were all on Daisy's side, for Aston himself was never anything but sternly laconic—that she told Daisy she really ought to apologise.

"You were worse than ever this morning. I know he felt it deeply. He drove past in the dog-cart half an hour ago; and I dare say he won't come home till all hours. After all, he is old enough to be your father, and if he doesn't wish you to go into those dirty houses, he knows best."

"It is such nonsense!"—impatiently, her eyes still bright from the very one-sided altercation she had had with her guardian at breakfast—"considering that I mean to devote my life to helping the poor. Anthony told me I was sure to be always bothered by people trying to prevent me. One good thing, I can do as I like when I am of age."

"You are always talking of this Mr. Anthony Melvin," said Miss Ross, curiously, looking up from the stocking she was mending, as she sat before the sitting-room fire. Daisy was standing at the window near the fireplace, gazing out with bright, vexed eyes into the street. She turned and looked at Miss Ross, and all the petulance had vanished.

"Oh, I am sure you would like him. He is so good and brave, and he always tried to make me patient, though"—with a recollection—"he used to get awfully impatient himself sometimes. He and I used to play together in Australia. Then I left Australia with father, and never heard anything more of him till he turned up in Leipsic two years ago. He remembered me at once when we met in the street. So did I him. Of course he came to see me; and he was very sorry when I had to come away."

"He would be more sorry if he could see me here in this dull little place," she thought, petulantly, and then her generous nature reasserted itself, and she felt remorseful. For everybody had been very kind to her.

"What was he doing in Leipsic?"

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"Oh, studying."

"What is he studying?"

"All sorts of things—painting, music, philosophy, science. He's taken them all up by turns. He's dreadfully clever, you know."

"It is a pity he doesn't keep to one thing," with an attempt at moralising.

"But that wouldn't do. His real study is human nature," with a certain grand air, which was as deliciously pretty as all her other airs.

"Human nature! Is he going to make a living out of human nature?"

"He's not going to make a living at all. He's like me. He has enough money to live for others. He is going to be a—well, a sort of philanthropist, though we hate the word. Because we think all men and women, even the poorest and most degraded, are our brothers and sisters; and when we go to work among them, we are going as their brother and sister, not as superior beings, condescending to be kind to them!" with fine scorn, remembering a visit from one of the clergymen's wives of the town to a poor, sick woman, at which she had assisted.

Miss Ross was growing bewildered and rather alarmed.

"What do you mean?"

"Why! That we are going to devote our time, our education, our money, to help those who are so miserable. He is going back to Australia, to work in Sydney or Melbourne, and I shall go to London, I think. Father, you see, was English; and I think I couldn't find a place more in need of help than the East End. Anthony used to get me papers about it."

"And so—Anthony is going out to Australia again."

"Of course. It is his country, you know, and he must do his work there; though his family comes originally from England. But he was born there; so, of course, he ought to work there."

She spoke the last words in a lower and more reflective tone. It was as if she were recalling arguments which had once been used on this same subject, and which were quite conclusive.

"Of course he must," she said, after a pause, with a decision which rather startled Miss Ross, she having forgotten what Daisy had been saying in thoughts of her own.

That afternoon she declined to go out with Miss Ross, who wanted to pay a visit. About four o'clock she went into the dining-room, and sat down by the fire, her face turned towards the glass doors leading into the garden. She stirred the fire into a brighter blaze, for, curiously enough, she who had once been as fearless as a schoolboy had begun to have a great dislike to sitting alone in the dark in any of the rooms of Bridge House. She did not know when the feeling had first come over her, or what it was she feared. Perhaps it was the lingering effect of the fright she had had that night. Perhaps a shrinking dislike she had taken to the housekeeper was the cause.

It was dark outside in the garden, and she could see nothing through the glass doors.

There had been heavy rains lately. The ground was sodden, full of dead plants and mouldering vegetation, which left a faint, sickly odour in the air. The river was swollen, and its turbid waters, flecked with yellow foam, swirled past the house with monotonous, dreary voices, which depressed the girl with a sense of eerie gloom she could not throw off.

"It must be the rain," she thought.

Suddenly her eerie, unreasonable fears culminated in a passion of terror.

Looking in through the glass door, framed by the darkness behind and about, she fancied she saw a dreadful, white, despairing face.

With a faint cry, she sprang up, and ran towards the doors.

As she did so they opened, and Aston stepped into the room, a gust of rain, which had begun to fall again, following him in. He shut the door hastily.

Daisy stopped short, covered with amused vexation at her own folly; but very glad to see him.

"Do you know, I am really growing very silly, Mr. Aston!" she exclaimed. "Would you believe it, I was fancying all sorts of absurdities! I fancied there was a face watching me from the garden, and it gave me such a fright. And I rushed to see what it was. Wasn't it dreadfully silly? I am getting quite a coward."

"You ought not to be alone," he said, hastily; but there was a curious look in his eyes. "Where is Maria?"

"I ought to be ashamed of myself, you mean," she answered brightly. "Miss Ross went out to pay some visits. I did not go because I wanted to speak to you."

"To me!"

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They had come back into the fire-light, and he saw that she was flushing. He drew back a step, and leant with his back against the chimney-piece, his face turned from the fire-light.

"I wanted to tell you how sorry I am that I spoke so crossly to you this morning at breakfast. I knew all along that it was wrong; but——" She stopped, and then went on courageously, "I know you are always right, even when I am most rebellious and tiresome." There was a strange glow in his eyes. "You are so much older——"

He turned his head away sharply, muttering something under his breath. It sounded like a malediction, and she stopped, her heart beating with the curious, nameless fear that sometimes touched her when in his presence. He saw the consternation. He laughed, though the sound was not quite natural.

"I'm a fool," he said, with grim sarcasm. "But when you speak of my age, in that tone, it seems as if we shall never be good friends; and I want your friendship as well as your—obedience."

She looked at him startled, indignant, her girlish pride conquering the fear. "Can old age and youth ever be friends?" he asked in that same half-bitter mockery. Then he saw that he had wounded her to the quick.

"Forgive me!" he exclaimed with a bitter-sweet smile. "I am a fool. Why should I exact more than you can give?"

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she cried, under her breath, moved by that smile and the self-reproach of the words. "I did not think my foolish conduct was giving you that idea! Oh, please believe me, I never imagined that it would make you think that I did not like you!"

"Do you mean to say——" he began, his voice vibrating; and then, with a violent effort, he checked himself. "Yes, I have been afraid sometimes that you did not—care for me," he went on, in a tone which sounded cold and constrained after the former eagerness. "And it hurt me to think that you looked on me only as a stern, disagreeable guardian," with a slight smile.

"Oh, but I never did," she said, laughing; but her pulses were beating quickly in response to some mental disturbance aroused by his manner. "I knew you were always kind and good to me. Perhaps I have been just a little afraid of you sometimes," she added, truthfully; "and I don't like being afraid. And I believe, sometimes, it was just out of defiance that I made myself so disagreeable. But I promise you I will never be frightened any more," she said, with a bright smile, holding out her hand to his.

He took it, and held it for a second, looking down into her face with such strange, searching eyes, that her pulses began hurrying again.

"Thank you for that," he said, slowly. "See, I will tell you what I have never told to any one. My life is not so fortunate as people think it; but its abysses are my own; and I do not see why others should be compelled to look into their dreariness." He stopped, then went on: "I would not have told you, but sometimes I cannot help longing for human sympathy, and if you will help me I shall be grateful."

"How can I help you?"

"By trusting me, and treating me as your friend; by believing that I would do all in my life to make you happy."

He dropped her hands abruptly and turned away. She stood still for a moment after he had left her, bewildered, amazed, almost frightened. She did not understand his manner. But another did—Jane, as her master turned towards the screen, which shut off the other end of the room, vanished, a stealthy shadow. Neither had noticed her. She had come as they talked, always listening whenever they were together.

She hurried back to the kitchen; her face white and set.

"I knew it! It has come, as I said it would. He loves her—that pretty baby creature, who has done nothing for him, while I—— I hate her!"

Then she swore to herself that if that curse, uttered years before, had any power still to blast, it should stand between him and his new love.

That, if need be, it should take face and form in her person. That even to death she would bear out its fulfilment.

That night the fatal feet — which heralded death and dishonour to the house—were again heard passing up the staircase.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 46.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII. A SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

ON the whole England is a church-going nation, especially in its rural districts. The beautiful little church which, built by the generosity of a former Eagle Bennison, nestled among its firs, would certainly have been thought to have been built in vain had the Squire and his lady not occupied one seat—there were no pews, for Mr. Heaton's church was known for miles round as the High Church—and had not Kestell of Greystone and his daughters been in the seat close behind them; for, to their honour be it said, unless absent from home, these two representative men always did occupy their seats.

The Squire had no particular doctrines to uphold; but he liked things, as he said, done "decently and in order." He was usually tired on Sunday, from no mean bodily exertion during the week, so he understood Sunday to mean a day of rest; and no one was ever surprised to see the Squire gently nodding through the sermon. The Squire himself was too humble to fancy his actions of any importance, even to the preacher. He knew his wife would keep up the honour of the family.

Mrs. Eagle Bennison always put on a special mood for Sunday; but it depended which Sunday it was.

But Mrs. Eagle Bennison always knew exactly who was at church, and what cottager's wife on the estate had not followed her example of having "no care for the Sunday dinner." If she remembered the culprit during the week, that unfortunate woman would receive a visit; but the Squire's wife, having rather a short memory, sometimes went to the wrong Mrs. Smith, and delivered the lecture kindly, but firmly, before she discovered her mistake by the remark of the woman:

"Well, ma'am, I'm sorry to seem rude; but I did get to church, though Tom didn't much like my going about on Sunday morning."

"Then it must have been your neighbour, Mrs. Smith. If you were there, you can tell me the text. I always look it out; it's such a help during the week."

"I dare say it is, ma'am; but if you'll excuse me speaking plain, texts don't help you much at the wash-tub. Texts seem to me like the flour before you've rolled in the butter, when you're making pastry, it's best to wait to the end to see if it'll come out agreeable-like; but Mr. Heaton he most in general works 'em in well. Tom and me often says so."

After this Mrs. Eagle Bennison beat a retreat to the other Mrs. Smith.

Miss Heaton devoted herself to the school children, sitting where she could be in easy reach of them, and every five minutes making a dive at the sinner, and returning to her seat with some confiscated property.

Elva had once declared she was sure the children were naughty out of kindness of heart for fear of leaving Miss Heaton unemployed.

All this may sound very unfit occupations to be carried on in a church, especially in one standing, as this did, surrounded by all the works of Nature, which, in their manner, ceaselessly gave thanks; but there was many a man and woman who did listen, and, as far as pos-

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sible, fulfil the highest part of their being by prayer and praise. Mr. Heaton, himself, was certainly one of these. When he came home it was in vain that Clara questioned him about those who had attended, his ambiguous answer of "Oh, I daresay he or she was there," was apt to make his sister say:

"It really is your duty to know who comes to your church, Herbert."

Mr. Kestell neither went to sleep nor found his texts; but he was, as Clara expressed it, "quite a pillar of your church, Herbert."

"Not my church, dear, I hope."

"Well, you know what I mean, Herbert. Mr. Kestell is a great support to our schools. With all her talk, Mrs. Eagle Bennison is very mean; and, if it were not for Mr. Kestell, we should be very badly off."

"Mr. Kestell is very kind and generous; but he is much richer than the Squire, and has no landed property."

"You always find excuses for people, Herbert. It's a ridiculous habit."

When Clara was angry with him, Herbert only smiled. It was safer to accept blame which only was meant for himself.

On this special Sunday the small church was quite full. Indeed, Mrs. Eagle Bennison secretly wished both the Mrs. Smiths had stayed at home, as every seat was occupied. Jesse Vicary, who came in a little late, was put into the Squire's seat, much against his own will, however.

Hoel Fenner had managed to sit where he could see the Kestells. In London he was not a very constant worshipper; but here, of course, church-going was expected of one, and Hoel, as we know, prided himself on doing what was expected of him; being one of those men who find it real pain to disappoint people if they have formed a good opinion of any one.

But as his eyes travelled towards Elva, they lighted on Jesse Vicary.

"I must speak to him after church," he thought. "How well and handsome he looks; these few days of country life have made another man of him. Curiously enough, he looks here quite like a gentleman. He might be a young country squire, with his strong build and resolute face."

Something else Hoel saw, but did not remark in words to himself; and this was that Jesse Vicary was certainly attending to the words he was hearing, and not merely watching his neighbours.

"It's born in that class," he thought, after a few moments. "They ought to be grateful to Nature for giving them so much young-world faith."

And so the service went on; and if the angel of record passed down and noted the prayers that were uttered that morning, not many from Hoel Fenner were there of a certainty.

When the people streamed out there were friendly gatherings in the fir-avenue that led from the church to the moor. Hoel was only in time to help Elva and her sister into the carriage, and to greet their father.

"I hear you want to see me," said Mr. Kestell, gently. "Come and dine with us, Mr. Fenner, this evening, then we can have plenty of leisurely talk."

"Thank you; if Miss Heaton will spare me."

"Then do come. All right, Turner."

The horses went off. Everybody made way for Mr. Kestell's beautiful horses. Mrs. Eagle Bennison, leaning on her husband's arm, smiled sadly at the two sisters; her smile meant:

"I never take out my horses on Sunday. I cannot understand how you can do it."

The look always troubled Amice, who made objections to driving home from church; but it was a standing custom, which Mr. Kestell would not alter. He was always hoping his wife would be well enough to join him. It was for her sake, so there was no hope of altering, and Amice had to resign herself, but it was a weekly trial to her. Saint Catherine of Sienna would never have driven to church in a carriage with a pair of horses.

Hoel, seeing he had half an hour before he should have to appear, joined Jesse and his sister. He thought the sister looked nothing particular; but he had just adopted his model for perfection, and certainly Symee in no way resembled Elva Kestell.

"So you got my letter, Vicary, and you agree to my clearing the way," he said, when Symee said she must hurry home, for the blissful time at the farm was over for her.

"I shall be very much obliged if you would do so, sir. Of course, I do not allow that Mr. Kestell has a right to settle my affairs—I mean no real right, but from courtesy and gratitude I should wish him to approve. I am not sure, however, [illegible] he will understand the change, unless you explain that I shall in truth better my position; and as I shall be doing very congenial work, I shall certainly be happier."

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"He will easily be made to understand that. Of course, you will have to give due notice."

"A month on either side, sir. But I should not like to leave my employers in any difficulty."

"As to that, a clerk's place is soon caught up. Alas, there are too many waiting; and the world ought to thank you for making room."

"I will come to-morrow and speak to Mr. Kestell myself, of course," said Jesse, decidedly. "He would like me to do that I am sure; but he has always been so kind that he will make no long opposition—none, indeed, when he sees it will be for my good."

"Of course not."

"And, Heaven helping me, I will do my best in my new position," added Jesse, with a quiet, determined look on his face. "When I have spoken to Mr. Kestell, I will tell my sister that if she will begin in a small way, she may come to me at once. She can help me with copying; and I have an idea that I could have a type-writer, and teach her to use it; she is very clever with her fingers, and is not badly educated for her position."

There was such a ring of hopefulness and joy in Vicary's voice, that Hoel was more than satisfied he had found the right man. He prided himself once more on his discernment.

"Besides, I owe the fellow some thanks for bringing me down here again. It would have been difficult to appear without some excuse," thought Hoel, as he retraced his steps, making up his mind to ramble out alone after lunch to avoid Miss Heaton's searching questions.

He framed Mrs. Hoel Fenner in a gold frame, in which she looked lovely. She was to be much admired by the best and choicest literary society in London that would circle round them. And deep down in his heart there was another motive, powerful, though not specially praiseworthy. If he married Elva Kestell, there would be no need of ever applying to his uncle for a loan; and there would be no dread of that "if" which had rankled so deeply in his breast. The old man's selfishness would be wasted, and Hoel would be sufficiently revenged. The London Hospital might inherit with pleasure, and much good might it derive from it. Still, let it be clearly understood that Hoel was not thinking of marrying for money; he was quite above such a thought; indeed, he would have preferred to marry a woman who was not an heiress, but as his choice had fallen on one who was rich, all the benefits that would accrue crowded to his brain.

The idea of failure did not much trouble him. True, he remembered her blush when Walter Akister passed by; but he could not imagine a woman really giving herself to such a very unpromising specimen of the human species; at least, not such a woman as Elva.

If some misfortunes cast their shadows before them, is it expecting too much of some events of a more joyful character to cast reflected lights? This Sunday Elva had risen with a strange feeling of lightheartedness about her, which surprised herself. If she thought about Hoel, yet it was not with him that she associated her happiness, though she looked forward to seeing him again and hearing him talk. When she did not remember her "Undine" she enjoyed Hoel's conversation, as, indeed, most people did.

Amice, whose moods were never on the surface and were altogether of another and stranger type, was surprised to hear Elva offer to accompany her to the school after lunch. She was accustomed to going her own way alone on these errands of mercy.

The two sisters walked a little way in silence down the hill beyond Rushbrook, where a scattered hamlet necessitated a Sunday class in two rooms of a cottage. Miss Heaton much disliked this class, for here Herbert and Amice met every Sunday; but the young ladies before-mentioned not living very near had not volunteered to take the girls, so Amice was allowed to do it by Clara Heaton; but always under protest. Had she guessed that Amice looked upon Herbert as simply a clergyman who would of course never marry, she might have been saved many an anxious hour.

"Amice, dear, did not you think papa looked rather worried this morning? I hope that nothing is the matter," said Elva as they walked along.

"Did he? Perhaps he fancied mamma might not like a visitor this evening."

"Oh, it could not be about Mr. Fenner, he seemed quite eager he should come. Do you like him, Amice?"

"Like him—whom do you mean?"

Elva again felt a little uncomfortable about Amice; now and then these dreamy moods seemed to come over her and she seemed to hear nothing.

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"Why, Mr. Hoel Fenner. He even managed to interest mamma yesterday. I wonder what he wants to say about Jesse Vicary."

Amice lifted her dreamy eyes from the ground.

"He has not come only about Jesse Vicary."

"About what else, then?" but, as she spoke, Elva blushed, for Amice fixed her eyes upon her sister's face, and the gaze seemed to explain the mystery. Elva was indignant.

"He is not good enough for you," continued Amice, quietly; "but I saw it plainly yesterday."

Elva stood quite still now, and stamped her foot.

"Amice, you are too ridiculous; and you ought not to carry your—your fancies so far; it is not right. I am sure Mr. Hoel Fenner has come only to see papa."

"Elva, don't look like that, I am so sorry to hurt you, darling. I did not mean it;" she covered her face with her hands. "Yes, I see it again, it is the curse on our family. That idea takes possession of me more and more. There is a curse upon us and all our doings."

They were walking by the side of a fir-copse, and some great trunks lay on one side of the road, looking very inviting. Elva sat down and gently drew Amice to her side.

"What do you mean about the curse? Why, that is perfectly ridiculous! Was there ever a family more blessed than we are?"

"You forget what I told you about myself, Elva. Is not that a curse? Do you not consider how hard, how very hard it is to——"

She broke off, for Elva's face was not at all sympathetic; but, on the contrary, it expressed impatience.

"You brood and fancy till I do believe you lose all common sense, Amice; do be sensible, and don't say things which—which make me angry."

"About Mr. Fenner? Well, then, I will say no more, only you forget, dear, that we have often talked about the future. You will marry some day. You have often told me what your husband was to be like. Oh, Love must be a beautiful thing, when it can be pure, and great, and noble; when two people can offer all they have to a service which is above them, and just go on together fighting against evil."

"That is an impossible ideal," said Elva, softly.

"Does it seem so to you? And yet I can see it—only sometimes, though. It seems to me that if two could be found to go hand in hand into those dark alleys and those wicked courts in London, or elsewhere, and if they could go and say that they knew what happiness there was in the true light, even the most miserable and the most degraded would believe two witnesses. Do you think, Elva, it is all an empty vision, and only part of the—curse?"

"Nonsense!" said Elva. "And there is the bell ringing, so you must not stay longer. I shall take a walk on the moors. And please, dear Amice, shake off all your ideas; indeed, it is much better to be like other people." And with this advice, Elva turned back, and plunged into heather. She felt troubled at what Amice had said, even though she dismissed it from her mind with an impatient gesture.

"I want life and love," she thought. "I wonder if many girls want it as I do. I wish I could do great things; and yet nothing seems to happen to me except——" The wind swept suddenly past; and with a little shudder Elva shook off the disagreeable idea. "I won't think of Mr. Akister. I never, never could love him. I can't think how he dared to—fancy I ever could. I believe in happiness, even though Amice will not. She fancies God calls people to accept misery. No, no, that cannot be."

Still fighting her way through the thick heather, and fighting inwardly the idea that in any way human beings are called to be miserable, Elva reached the foot of the Beacon, and, scrambling up a long bank, she sat down under the shadow of a Scotch fir-tree. In a few moments the beauty of the scenery, the sweet scent of the heather, the hum of a bumble-bee, seeking out the largest flower, all the sights and sounds gradually numbed her senses. She was inhaling a narcotic. Nature seemed to be taking the eager child in her arms, and lulling her into a softer and more peaceful mood. The birds and the insect life seemed to sing the same song of happiness, and to repeat that life is made for joy, and that the creed of suffering is false; that Amice, with her wild idea of curses and of expiation, was mistaken, and that——

How was it? Surely she was acting the same scene again. She had been here

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before; she had gone over the struggle, and, yes——

"Miss Kestell, this is an unexpected pleasure."

Elva's sudden fear was calmed; it was not Walter Akister's voice she heard, or his strange, fierce looks she looked up to behold, but—Hoel Fenner.

"Can you wonder that one gets to love this place?" answered Elva, not surprised that Hoel sat down beside her as if this was his right place.

"No, indeed, I do not; I have been watching you for a few moments," he said, slowly, "and I saw that you alone, in all this spot perhaps, really appreciate what you see."

Hoel was struggling with his own eagerness to speak to Elva, somehow or other to make her understand that she attracted him above all other women; but she was so perfectly natural, that it was a harder task than he expected. There was not the least consciousness of his admiration in her face; the deep grey eyes looked out upon the beauty of nature, not on his own perfections. Hoel did not know that this morning Elva would have looked straight into his face. It was Amice's words that kept her eyes averted, even though she did not believe them.

"I came out here to wait for Mr. Heaton. He said he might join me if he were not detained, and I believe he is teaching some brats now. I wonder how much good all that sort of thing does? I don't mean any disrespect to Herbert Heaton or his cloth; but, in the long run, isn't a clergyman's life rather a wasted labour? Good people are sometimes so very disagreeable."

Elva might have agreed with him a little while ago; now she was seized with the spirit of contradiction.

"How can doing things for people we love be waste of time?"

"Love is a wide term when used by the clergy, for instance. Most of them will work from duty, and duty is a desire to get a good deal of percentage for your money. Disinterestedness is difficult to find."

"Oh no, no," said Elva, "that cannot be so. I know my sister is perfectly disinterested. I don't think the idea of reward ever enters her head."

Elva forgot all about Amice's stray words now in defending her, and looked straight and fearlessly at Hoel.

"You are a true friend, Miss Kestell," he said, in an altered tone. "The first time I saw you I was struck by your being entirely different from every other woman I have met. You must give me leave to ask you—to tell you something here out on this heather bank; may I?"

There was no answer. Elva blushed deeply. After all, was Amice right? But how different this was from Walter's speech. The deep courtesy of the tone was very flattering, coming as it did from such a man.

"Will you give me leave?" he repeated, and there was something quite new in his tone—a boyish sort of pleading which she had never heard or noticed before.

"I don't understand what you mean," said Elva, quite afraid that she was weaving a wrong meaning into his words because of Amice's silly speech.

"Yes, I see you don't. I have no right to expect that you should understand me; but I do ask you to believe me. Will you?"

"Yes, of course," said Elva, recovering her breath. "Why should I doubt you?"

"Because you have known me so short a time, and because you may not believe that there is very deep, earnest truth in what I am saying. You remember that dinner party? I am afraid I unwittingly offended you that evening, and yet I assure you I meant to do the contrary. I thought then that you were the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and then I knew that my fate had brought me here, and that you were the only woman I ever wished to—to—— Miss Kestell, tell me if I may go on. My life will be dead for ever if you tell me that I am annoying you. Shall I go on?"

Elva was slowly picking a piece of quaking-grass to pieces, bit by bit.

"Yes," she said; feeling as if she were another Elva, or not herself.

"I met you here on this moor the next day, you remember. Some second sights disenchant us. I was not disenchanted. I admired you a thousand times more. You seemed to me like a breath of this life-giving air, and yet a woman whom any man, all the rest of his life, might be proud to have loved. But when we parted I saw you throw away my gift of flowers. I knew then that I must, indeed, have been personally disagreeable to you. You do not deny it. Why should you? I saw that you had no wish to see more of me, and yet—don't despise me because I am making my confession, Miss Kestell—and yet I was even more attracted. I went

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home and tried to think it was all a happy autumn dream — a delusion that would fade. On the contrary; the more I tried to forget you the more your presence took possession of me. In short, I am here again, and this time there shall be no deception. I would much rather know that nothing can overcome your prejudice, your dislike, than make myself still more obnoxious to you. But last evening, you did not repel me. I cannot tell how thankful I am to meet you, because, if I hear my sentence from your lips, no one need know, no one need ever hear that——"

"It is all so strange," said Elva, "what can I say?"

"Do not decide," said Hoel, very tenderly; he was touched by her distress. "I only want to let you judge whether some day you will care to keep a bunch of gentians, if I am here to give them to you?"

This was a very delicate way of making an offer, and Elva felt grateful. There was none of that fierce passion about him that there had been about Walter Akister; the very difference attracted her, for the other had repelled her. The relief of finding Mr. Fenner was not going to make her say yes or no on the spot was so great, that Elva smiled.

"I expect, Mr. Fenner, that you have made a mistake," she said, suddenly; and the eyes that looked at him were so bright, that Hoel was more and more certain he had made none. "If you will walk round by the copse, I will make a confession, and then, after that, I am sure you will change your mind."

"A confession?"

"Yes, one that will alter the opinion you have of me. Indeed, you do not know me any more than——"

"Than you can know me. But I want your leave to teach you that I, at all events, do not make up my mind unless I am quite sure——"

Elva laughed now. She was young, and had the world before her. She was loved, and that was very sweet, even though she was not sure of loving, and had a confession to make.

"You once said very, very unkind things of me."

"I? Never."

"Yes, you did, and the truth is, I have never forgiven you. You see that I have so much to unlearn."

"What do you mean?"

Hoel was not given to much humour, and he resented Elva's smile; for humour ought never to touch us personally if it is to be acceptable.

"I do not want to tell you, and yet I feel I ought to. How can any one love without perfect confidence? There, I will tell you, I wrote 'An Undine of To-day.'"

Elva paused on the sandy path and faced her detractor.

"You were Isidore Kent?"

Poor Hoel remembered clearly all the things he had said.

"Yes; now you see how differently you will think of me."

"But I care only about Elva Kestell," he said, just a little angry that the two were the same. Hoel had no wish to marry an authoress; he had a very decided objection to women writers unless they were of the first water; and then only at a distance from him.

"And you quite despise Isidore Kent. I knew you would."

"You will never write another novel," he said, in a low voice, not daring to take her hand, because of that perfect absence of all consciousness in her at this moment.

"Why?"

"Because, if you would give me leave, I shall make you the happiest woman in the world; and the happiest women do not write."

They had reached the place where their roads parted. Elva paused.

"Good-bye," she said, holding out her hand. "I would rather go home alone."

"May I ask your father this evening whether I may come to Rushbrook till—I know my fate?"

"Till I know my mind," she said with a brilliant smile. Then earnestly, in quite another mood, she added, passionately: "I want life to be beautiful. I want to have room in the world; will love give it to me? Amice believes in nothing but self-denial; but I am not good like Amice."

"Thank Heaven!" said Hoel to himself; aloud, he said:

"Give me leave to try, and I will make you understand that love can give you everything."

"And if I disappoint you?"

"Then you will be my most-loved memory," he said, earnestly.

"MERRY CARLISLE."

Few of our English towns can compete in interest with "Merry Carlisle." As the

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capital of that debateable Borderland, where English and Scotch rovers and freebooters led for stirring centuries a life of lawlessness and disorder, it was seldom free from the alarms of war, and its citizens may be said to have slept with hand on sword. The mere mention of its name fills one's ears with the whistle of cloth-yard shafts or the roar of cannon, and one's eyes with the pride and circumstance of military array. No other town in England, probably, has had to guard so vigilantly against hostile aggression. Perhaps no other town, if we except London, enjoys such an unbroken continuity of historical tradition. Its very name is British. Moreover, it is the only town, as Mr. Creighton points out, which has been added to England since the Norman Conquest. The picturesqueness of its position, though in this respect it is inferior to Durham, is an item in its account which must not be overlooked. A rising ground is shaped into a peninsula by two streams — the Calder and the Petteril, which, within less than a mile of each other, flow into the broad Eden as it rolls on its way to the Solway Firth. To the north this rising ground forms a bluff of sandstone which overlooks the Eden. Obviously the situation is not without attractive features.

Long before history begins, a tribe of the Brigantes occupied this ascent, which, with its woods and rivers, offered them shelter and security. They called their fortified homestead — an earthwork was thrown across the lower part of the peninsula — Caer Lywelydd, the town or camp of Lywelydd; a name which, through successive mutations, as Lugubalia, Caerhuel, Cardel, has come down to us in the form of Carlisle. Their pastoral peace was broken up by Agricola, the great soldier-statesman, who led the Roman legions on their march of conquest to the Firth of Tay. Driving the Britons from their hill, he planted a garrison on the opposite bank of the river, on the site of the present village of Stanwick. The great wall of Hadrian, which ramparted Norman England against invasion from the north, crossed the Eden just below Lugubalia, and considerably added to its strategic importance. From the neighbouring stations a network of roads was made to converge upon it, while the western branch of the great "via" from Eboracum (York) to Cataractorium (Catterick) passed through it to the Clyde. So it grew into a prosperous and populous town, and fared mighty well until the fourth century, when the Roman Colossus began to totter towards its collapse. In 409 the Roman eagles were withdrawn from the great wall, and Lugubalia was left to provide for its own defence. The British people then took up arms with no little resolution, maintaining a gallant struggle against the Picts and Scots, who harassed them from the north, and the English, who were advancing from the south. It was during this period of stress and strain that they adapted the old Celtic legend of Arthur to their own patriotic needs, symbolising in him the Deliverer for whom they hoped and waited. It was then that Arthur's Seat and Arthur's Chair and Arthur's Table became localised in the neighbourhood of Carduel, under which name Carlisle figures conspicuously in the Arthurian romances.

Early in the seventh century the Berenician or Northumbrian English invaded this British territory, which, for some time, had been included in the Scotch kingdom of Strathclyde, and won a great battle at Degsastan or Dawstane Burn. Thereafter Caerduel passed under the influence of the conquerors, and a monastery was founded within its bounds about 684, and given in charge to Cuthbert, the saintly Bishop of Lindisfarne. But the overthrow of the Northumbrian power a few years afterwards, restored Caerduel to Strathclyde, and a century of disorder ensued which has left no intelligible record. In 875 it was plundered and burnt by the Danes, who destroyed town, fortress, and monastery; nor did it again lift up its head until the firm hand of the Norman Kings gave to England a settled government and a complete local organisation. William Rufus, claiming it as English ground, fortified it in 1092 after the Norman fashion, building a stout wall round its area, and raising a strong tower, which was enlarged and strengthened in the succeeding reign, on the summits of its sandstone cliff. He also planted it with colonies from Hampshire and other parts, with Flemish masons, and Norman soldiers. At the same epoch a monastery was founded by a Norman named Walter, which Henry the First completed, and bestowed upon the Austin or Augustinian Canons, the convent-church being dedicated, about 1118, to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In this way Carlisle came to have "everything handsome about it," and was fully equipped in its civil, military, and ecclesiastical relations. It was made the seat of a Bishopric, with a jurisdiction

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extending over Cumberland and Westmoreland; and Adelulf, Prior of Nostell, was consecrated as its first pastor in August, 1133.

Being the great Frontier Fortress, on the border-line between England and Scotland, it had necessarily a stormy career, a kind of April existence, alternating between periods of good and evil fortune. Its English character was frequently disputed by the Scottish Kings, and, indeed, was not finally established until the reign of Henry the Third, when, through the good offices of a Papal legate, Alexander the Second abandoned all pretensions to it in return for certain demesnes (1242). Soon afterwards, a joint commission of English and Scottish Knights was appointed, who drew up a code of Border laws for the purpose of introducing some measure of order and discipline among the unruly population of the debateable lands.

Very little profit resulted from their labours, Edward the First stirring up the warlike feelings of the Borderers by his plans for the conquest of Scotland. On Carlisle fell the first "shock of arms:" the men of Annandale—forty thousand in number, it is said, but the figures are, doubtlessly, an exaggeration—surrounding the city, in March, 1296, and devastating the suburbs with fire and sword. The citizens seized their weapons, and made ready to hold their own; but a Scottish spy, contriving to escape, set fire to the prison, mounted the walls, and encouraged his countrymen to advance. A strong wind spread the flames far and wide, until a great part of the city was destroyed. In the confusion which took place, the walls were left almost unguarded; but while the burgesses were endeavouring to extinguish the fire, the women took their places, hurling stones from the battlements and keeping the assailants at bay with caldrons of boiling water. The Scotch made an attempt to burn down the city gates; but some of the citizens mounting the platform above the gate, fished up the leader of the attack with an iron hook, and held him aloft while others smote him dead with their lances. Dispirited by the loss of their commander the assailants sullenly withdrew.

After William Wallace's great victory at Stirling, he crossed the Border, committing the usual ravages, and, in due time, appeared before Carlisle. A priest was sent to demand its submission.

"My lord, William the Conqueror," he said, "sends to you that, taking thought for your lives, you may surrender to him your town and Castle without bloodshed. If you do this, he will spare your lives, limbs, and goods; if you refuse, he will put you all to the sword."

"Who is this Conqueror?" said the citizens.

"William, whom ye call Wallace."

"Our King," rejoined the men of Carlisle, "gave us to hold this town and Castle in his behalf, and we do not think it is his will that we should surrender it to your Lord William. Go and tell him that if he wishes to have it he must come and take it if he can, like a real Conqueror."

This bold answer, and the bold bearing that emphasized it, induced the Scots to pass by Carlisle and continue their southward march.

In 1298 Edward the First held a Parliament at Carlisle, which was now recognised "as the Royal head-quarters in the Scottish Expeditions," and was constituted, indeed, "a seat of the English Government."

When the great Plantagenet Sovereign—equally capable as warrior and statesman—prepared his last expedition against Scotland, in order to punish Robert Bruce (1307), it was at Carlisle that he mustered his array.

For a century and a half the history of Carlisle is simply a history of strife and contention. The outpost of England against her Scottish enemies, it always bore the brunt of their attack. How many sieges it withstood it is hardly worth while to enquire, as its position was in no wise altered by them; but this long discipline of warfare seems to have developed in its citizens a spirit of manly independence and an exceptional force of character.

Their Bishops were like unto themselves: witness gallant Bishop Kirby, who defended his diocese with indomitable resolution, and, on one occasion, led his men in person in pursuit of a large force of marauding Scots, upon whom he inflicted a very thorough chastisement. He was unhorsed in the affray, but recovered his seat with the nimbleness of a young Squire, and headed the decisive charge (1345).

Our Kings recognised the services of its citizens by heaping privileges upon it, such as few other English towns can have enjoyed; and in spite of its frequent

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"baptisms of fire," the brave old city enjoyed a fair measure of prosperity.

The Convent-Church had long ago blossomed out into a Cathedral, which, in the fourteenth century, was rebuilt in the then prevailing style of architecture (Decorated), at least so far as regarded the choir, to which an additional bay was added, so as to make its entire length one hundred and thirty-eight feet. The nave at this time belonged to the citizens. It was a stately piece of Norman work, which needed neither restoration nor enlargement. When new transepts and a central tower were erected by Bishop William Strickland (1400–1419), Carlisle had a cathedral-church of which neither its priests nor its citizens had any reason to feel ashamed.

Among the famous names connected with Carlisle's grey old Castle is that of Richard the Third, who, when Duke of Gloucester, frequently resided there as Captain of the Castle, and Lord Warden of the Marches. He seems to have enlarged and strengthened it, and a tower on the wall, outside the moat, which connected it with the city, is still called Richard's Tower, and bears his well-known cognisance of a boar. Another name to be remembered is that of the Earl of Surrey, the "belted Will Howard" of Scott's chivalrous poem, who, in conjunction with Lord Dacre of Naworth, humbled the pride of Scotland on the red field of Flodden. By both these barons the southern districts of Scotland were ravaged with remorseless barbarity, provoking similar depredations on the part of the Scots. Our northern ballad-literature teems with stirring narratives of "peril and adventure" belonging to this dark period of international hostility; but romantic as such incidents appear in the rough-and-ready verse of the old minstrels, they were the potent cause of terrible sufferings, while they strengthened the bitterness of feeling which had too long prevailed between the two peoples.

An interesting chapter in the annals of the frontier-city deals with James the Fifth's attempt to gain possession of it in November, 1542. For this purpose ten thousand Scots, under Lord Maxwell, suddenly crossed the Esk. Their line of march might have been traced by the lurid glare of blazing cottages and granaries. Though taken by surprise, the men of Carlisle promptly responded to the call to arms of their Captain, Sir Thomas Wharton, and, assisted by the local companies, which Lord Dacre and other nobles hurried up, advanced against the invaders, who, having quarrelled among themselves, broke in a panic at the approach of the sturdy Englishmen, and fled for their lives. Some fell on the field; many were taken prisoners; and hundreds perished in the swamps of Solway Moss. At the news of this disaster, James shut himself up in Falkland Palace, where he sickened of a slow fever and a broken heart, and died on the fourteenth of December—a week after the birth of his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots.

The Borders had been reduced into comparative order and tranquillity by the energy of Elizabeth and her ministers, and Carlisle had resumed the peaceful activity of civic life, when that unfortunate sovereign, Mary Queen of Scots, whose conduct and character have been so constant a theme of angry debate, and even whose beauty has been disputed—entered the border-capital as a guest to quit it as a prisoner. It was after the crushing defeat of her troops at Langside, that Mary resolved to throw herself upon Elizabeth's hospitality; and on the seventeenth of May, 1568, she was received at Carlisle by Lord Scrope, the Warden of the Marches. "The story of her coming," says Froude, "flew from lip to lip. Town and village, farm and manor-house, all over the northern counties, were frantic with enthusiasm. Her most eager hopes could not have been more brightly realised than they seemed in those first days. She held a little Court in the Castle, where all who wished to see her were received and welcomed."

But this promising condition of affairs was soon changed, and she was made to feel that her person was under restraint. In the haste of her flight she had come with no other clothes than those she wore; and an application to Elizabeth for the necessary additions to her wardrobe, brought her the niggardly present of "dos camisas ruines, y dos piezas de terciopelo negro, y dos pares de zapatos"—two torn chemises, two pieces of black velvet, and two pairs of shoes. Mary received them with such evident dissatisfaction, that Knowles, Elizabeth's agent, felt compelled to say that he thought "Her Highness's maid had mistaken, and had sent things necessary for such a maidservant as she was herself." However, on this point the Queen's anxiety was speedily relieved by the arrival of her own dresses from

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Lochleven; but the closeness of her confinement increased daily.

As large numbers of Scots came across the Border to see their Sovereign, Elizabeth's officers had by no means a happy time of it. Twice they took her out hunting; but she rode so fast, her servants were so well mounted, and the Scotch border was so near, that when she wanted to go out again, they were obliged to tell her "that she must hold them excused." Her chamber window — the visitor to Carlisle is still shown Queen Mary's Tower —looked northward, and might be used for communication with her friends. A disused postern-gate beneath was opened up, and sentries placed there, who could easily keep watch over the inconvenient casement.

So the time went on; Mary amusing herself, in the intervals of correspondence with Elizabeth, and interviews with Elizabeth's messengers, in the ordinary pursuits of feminine vanity. Mary Seaton—one of "the four Maries" — came to keep her captive mistress company, and as she had a pretty taste in "busking"—that is, hairdressing—the Queen almost every day astonished Sir Francis Knowles with some novelty in head-gear.

At length Elizabeth and her ministers resolved to remove their prisoner further inland, and chose Bolton Castle, in Yorkshire, as her place of residence. Mary strongly objected, and told Knowles she would not go there unless she was carried. In the belief that she would make some desperate effort to escape before the preparations for her removal were completed, her windows were barred with iron; her male servants were sent out of the Castle at sunset; and when she walked or rode she was attended by a hundred troops. On the thirteenth of July, in spite of "extreme stout threatenings," and other tragical demonstrations, the removal was effected, Mary having been made to understand that resistance was useless.

After the union of the two crowns in the person of James the First, Carlisle lost a good deal of its importance. Its garrison was withdrawn, and, from the position of the Frontier Fortress and Capital of the Borders, it sank into an ordinary market town or county capital.

In 1617 it had the honour of a visit from James the First. Seventeen years later, some tourists in northern England describe it as being "both for revenues, buildings, and the inhabitants, and their condition, very poor." The Cathedral is "like a great, wild country church; and as it appeared outwardly so was it inwardly, neither beautiful nor adorned one whit."

In the reign of Charles the First, however, it recovered much of its old dignity, and was for a time the chief Royal stronghold in the North. It sustained a protracted siege by the Scots, under Leslie, from October, 1644, until the following midsummer; its gallant defenders being compelled to eat hempseed, dogs, rats, and horse-flesh; and surrendering only when the crushing defeat of Charles, at Naseby, deprived them of all hope of relief.

The Scots remained in possession until December, 1646. To repair and strengthen the defences they made use of the solid masonry of the Cathedral, destroying the chapter-house, cloisters, canon-house, and a considerable portion of the nave.

In 1648, the town had another experience of civil war, and a Scottish garrison, on behalf of the King, was thrown into it by the Duke of Hamilton. But Cromwell, after his victory at Preston, sent a company of horse and foot to demand its submission; and its citizens knew he was not a man to be trifled with. Then came a long interval of peace.

In 1745 it was its ill luck to be involved in the troubles of the last Jacobite rebellion; and Prince Charles Edward, with his motley forces, appeared before its walls on the thirteenth of November. Under his banner served, if we may credit Sir Walter Scott, Fergus MacIvor, and the heir of Waverley, to say nothing of that estimable gentleman the Baron of Bradwardine. Scott tersely says: "They besieged and took Carlisle," and, as the town discreditably submitted in a couple of days, the incident was worth no more detailed notice.

On November the sixteenth, James the Third was proclaimed at the Market Cross, and on the eighteenth Prince Charles rode into the city, preceded by a hundred pipers. Just one month later he was back there again, the hero of a ruined cause; and, leaving a small garrison in the Castle, under Colonel Francis Townley, went on his way to Culloden and ruin. The Duke of Cumberland was following him closely, and on the thirty-first of December his troops entered the city, and made prisoners of the Jacobite garrison, three hundred and ninety-six in number. Thirty-one of the rebels, in October, 1746, suffered the barbarous penalties then inflicted for high

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treason, and were hung, drawn, and quartered on Gallows Hill. Their heads were set up on pikes over the gates, or "yetts," as commemorated in a beautiful old ballad:

White was the rose in his gay bonnet,
As he faulded up in his broached plaidie;
His hand, which clasped the truth o' luve,
Oh it was aye in battle readie!

His long, lang hair in yellow hanks
Waved o'er his cheeks sae sweet and ruddie,
But now they wave o'er Carlisle yetts,
In dripping ringlets, clotting bloodie.

Here ends the military history of Carlisle. Its later record is one of peace and prosperity, an immense stimulus having been supplied in 1761 by the introduction of cotton spinning and weaving, to which calico, hat, and iron manufactures have since been added, and the opening of improved communications between Whitehaven, Carlisle, and Newcastle. Then came the development of the railway system, which restored it to its old position as the Border-capital, and made it the great centre and point of junction of the Anglo-Scottish railways. Its terminus is one of the finest structures of the kind in Great Britain, and presents a singularly interesting picture of continuous animation and incessant activity, as the loaded trains pass in and out with much whistling and creaking, clashing and clanging, amidst the shouts of frenzied porters, the ringing of unmusical bells, the shrill cries of newspaper boys, and the various voices of arriving and departing passengers.

Since 1760, the population has increased ninefold, and now exceeds 37,000. Perhaps the most disappointing thing about "Merry Carlisle" to the stranger who visits it with his mind full of historic memories, is its air of newness. The greater part seems to have been built within the last forty years; and this impression is enhanced by the aspect of the trim villas, with their blooming gardens, which have sprung up in the environs. The ancient "yetts" and walls have almost entirely disappeared; and if the castle-keep happily retains its old solidity and strength, and the old drawbridge and castle-ditch are as they were in "days of yore;" little, indeed, survives of the buildings occupied by Edward the First, and afterwards by Queen Mary. But the Cathedral, with its beautiful choir, rich in all the glorious tracery and embellishment of the Decorated English Style, still recalls many a reminiscence of the past. Readers who delight in figures will be pleased to know that this choir, than which there are few finer in England, measures a hundred and thirty-seven feet long, seventy-one feet wide, and seventy-five feet high. It was restored, together with the remainder of the building, in 1853 to 1857. And as it represents the successive changes of our architecture from 1093 to 1419, Carlisle Cathedral, though not one of our great English minsters, has its attractions for the antiquarian student.

It is pleasant to remember that here, in 1797, Sir Walter Scott—not yet famous as "the Author of 'Waverley'"—married Miss Carpenter. And as also connected with it we may mention two men of note—Archdeacon Paley, author of "The Evidences of Christianity," to whom a monument has been erected, and Dean Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The latter held the deanery from 1849 to 1856, and during his residence underwent the terrible domestic affliction recorded in a few touching words on the base of a marble cross in Stanwick churchyard: "Here lie the mortal bodies of Five little Sisters, the much-loved Children of A. C. Tait, Dean of Carlisle, and Catherine his wife, who were all cut off within five weeks." They died of scarlet fever.

Traces of the antiquity of Carlisle occur in the names of some of its streets, such as English Street, Scotch Street, Tower Street, and Castle Street; Caldersgate, Botchergate, and Rickergate. The old English gate lies near the railway station; and close by are the two turrets, now used as Court-houses, which represent the Citadel erected by Henry the Eighth. The Market Cross is ancient; and both the Town Hall and the Guildhall date from the reign of Elizabeth.

Apart from its share in the old Border Minstrelsy, Carlisle has not much to boast of in the way of literary association; nor is its list of worthies a long or very brilliant one. Its poet—he is one of the Dii minores—Robert Anderson, born 1770, died 1833, has sketched the everyday life, manners, and customs of the Cumbrian peasantry with a certain rough vigour and a vividness of colouring which are not unattractive. Connected with the city, though not a native, was Robert Eglesfield, Queen Philippa's chaplain, who founded Queen's College, Oxford. Among the natives we find the learned Richard Muncaster, first master of Merchant Taylors' School, and afterwards head-

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master of St. Paul's. He died in 1611, bequeathing to posterity a good many poems, plays, and educational works, to which posterity has proved profoundly indifferent. Then there were Dr. John Aglionby, chaplain to Elizabeth and James the First, and principal of Edmund Hall, Oxford; and the learned theologian, Thomas Tutter, Dean of Ripon, who died in 1676; and George Tutter—who, we suppose, was the Dean's son—author of "The Government of the Thoughts," died 1695; and Sawrey Gilpin, R.A., died 1807, who illustrated the writings of his brother, the "picturesque" Mr. William Gilpin; and the Orientalist, Joseph Dacre Carlyle, born 1758, died 1804, who edited "Specimens of Arabic Poetry" and the "Arabic Bible," and was at one time Chancellor of the diocese. An admirable scholar and historical writer, well known to the readers of the present day, the Rev. Mandell Creighton, hails from the Border City, on which he has written an interesting monograph.

In our elder novelists we sometimes get glimpses of merry Carlisle in connection with the adventures of runaway couples, bound for the blacksmith's "Shrine of Hymen," at Gretna Green, Carlisle being the last stage before they crossed the Border, and were "married in haste"—too often to "repent at leisure." Smollett's "Humphrey Clinker," Mr. Matthew Bramble, after his visit to Scotland, re-entered England by way of Carlisle, and met there with his missing friend Lismahagow. And the reader will not fail to recollect that Mr. William Black, in his idyllic romance "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," takes his "young Uhlan," with the charming Bell and Queen Tita, to "the red old city that is set amid beautiful green meadows interlaced with streams," and the travellers visit the Castle, and, leaning on the parapets of red stone, gaze away up to the north, where the Scotch hills bound the horizon. "It is a pretty landscape that lies around Carlisle Castle — the bright and grassy meadows through which the Eden winds, the woods and heights of the country beyond, the far stretches of sand at the mouth of the Solway, and the blue line of hills telling of the wilder regions of Scotland."

It may be added that in the Whistlecraft burlesque epic on King Arthur and the Round Table, by Hookham Frere, the first canto contains an amusing description of King Arthur's Christmas at Carlisle, beginning:

> The great King Arthur made a sumptuous Feast,
> And held his Royal Christmas at Carlisle.

"BENEFIT OF CLERGY."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

LILY was "setting her room tidy." This process often took place, and was extremely simple. It consisted in turning out on to the floor the contents of every drawer and box she possessed, contemplating the heap thus made from every possible point of view, and then thrusting the component parts back into their respective receptacles in a confusion slightly increased by their temporary sojourn elsewhere.

On this particular occasion that consummation had been delayed. For nearly an hour Lily had been sitting on the floor beside the heap, her hands clasped round her knees, which were drawn up to make a resting-place for her head. Her face was turned towards a low window opposite to her, and there was an odd gravity about her eyes, an unusually serious turn in the corners of her mouth. She was in an irritated frame of mind. Throughout luncheon Mr. Heathcote had been absolutely silent, and had resisted all her efforts to make him talk. She had tried various subjects. The parish, first; but that had been promptly let drop by her uncle. The curates; but that had not been so much as taken up by him. Finally, and very tentatively, she had tried to begin a literary discussion by the somewhat wide remark that she liked Besant's novels. To which the Vicar had responded, irrelevantly:

"Did you ask me if I had done, Lily? I am quite ready, my dear," and had forthwith risen and gone to his study.

It was very stupid of him, Lily said to herself, indignantly—very stupid. He was always thinking of those dry old books in the study, or the papers covered with small, crabbed writing, which, as Lily put it, "littered" his study table.

"People should sometimes amuse other people," said poor Lily, aloud and incoherently, but pathetically. She was feeling decidedly bored. There was nothing interesting to be done. It was dull to go for a walk alone; and Mr. Maynard was out, she knew, somewhere; and Mr. Smith had probably got some-

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thing tiresome to do for her uncle. It must be so; for, if it had been possible, he would have turned up again to play tennis, as he had promised her.

It was all very provoking, she thought. She gave herself a twist round, and began idly playing with some of the odds and ends which were nearest to her in the heap at her side.

Lily possessed no jewel-case. If she had it would assuredly never have contained its lawful contents; for she threw each and any of her trinkets into the nearest drawer or box when she had done wearing it, and never thought of it till she wanted it again. So, mixed with ribbons, laces, and so forth, her brooches, necklaces, and bangles at this moment strewed the floor. She picked up one after another idly, and put them down again quickly. Suddenly she gave a pleased exclamation.

"What ages since I saw that!" she said. "Who would have thought of it's being twisted in that lace?", and her fingers hastily disentangled a little delicate gold bangle. "When did I have it last?" she went on musingly. "Oh, I remember. I don't believe I've ever seen it since last summer; not since I was at Farnborough. At Mrs. Rose's garden affair I wore it. I remember—I remember, quite."

Lily turned the tiny thing over and over slowly; but she was not looking at it. Her eyes were fixed on the bit of bright blue summer sky she could see through the low window; but they grew graver and softer, somehow. The wild, mischief-loving light died out of them. Suddenly Lily hid her face on her knees, and the bangle slipped unheeded to the floor. It was a long while ago since that garden-party; but she remembered it well, very well. She had lost that bangle in an excited set at tennis. Who was it who had looked for it and brought it to her? Lily pressed her face lower and lower on to her knees; but she saw, far more distinctly than she had seen the blue sky, a tall, upright figure, a pair of keen eyes in a dark, resolute face; a face which she knew had worn a very different look for her from that which it bore for any one else. But no—and Lily shook herself indignantly—no. It must be her fancy; it was only fancy; he had never cared for her; he would have come and told her so, surely, if it had been true; but he had made her think so, he had, indeed. Then Lily's face turned a brighter crimson in its hiding-place. What was she thinking of? The head-master of a great public school had other things to think of than a little girl whom he had met by chance when she was staying with one of his house-masters. Then he knew so many people, nice people, nice girls; and they all liked him, every one did. Perhaps he was married by now to one of them. Most likely, Lily thought, with a curious, aching feeling; but she wished she knew. She thought how foolish she had been not to write to Mrs. Rose more often, to keep up a correspondence which would at least remind her of that happy summer visit, and tell her what every one was doing at Farnborough. Every one? No; only what one person was doing.

All at once Lily jumped up from the floor, and unlocked a small drawer in a queer, little tiny cabinet, the contents of which had not shared in the common earthquake. But when she had unlocked it, she took out what she wanted rather slowly. It was a photograph—a group of all the masters at Farnborough, including Mr. Rose. It was not to look at Mr. Rose, however, that Lily had taken it from its place. Her eyes here fixed on the tall, thin figure which stood behind all the others, leaning one firm hand on the shoulder of the man who stood nearest to him, but looking—or she fancied so—rather lonely. She looked, and looked, and her face grew graver and graver—it altered into a face that Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard had never seen.

Suddenly the tea-bell rang. Lily glanced incredulously at her little American timepiece; but it was indeed five o'clock. She put her photograph away carefully first, then, with both arms, seized the heap on the floor, forced into three drawers the contents of six, and rushed downstairs to make tea.

Mr. Heathcote's afternoon had been troubled, indeed, and it was followed by a nearly sleepless night. He could think of no satisfactory way of arranging matters; and the next morning came without his having arrived at any conclusion whatever. He had thought of sending Lily away; but he dismissed that thought almost without consideration; he could not turn his brother's child from the only home she had; this was not to be thought of under any circumstances. His second impulse was, naturally, to dismiss Smith and Maynard. But a little reflection showed him that this course was almost as impracticable

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as the other. Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard would most assuredly refuse to leave Sweet Ancott without some really well-founded reason; and what could he give them? He could not simply say that they were idle; he could not say that they ran after his niece; neither of these reasons, cogent as they were in practice, was solid enough in theory to justify him in taking a step which would seriously injure both men in their future career as lights—or otherwise—of the Church.

All these arguments went through the Vicar's mind, again and again, in the same hopeless, inconsequent way.

Finally, next morning, after a still more abstracted and silent breakfast time, he decided to dismiss the whole subject from his thoughts for the time being, and to seek some rest and peace in reverting to Gregory of Nyssa.

He sought the calm of his study, and in the course of his first half-hour's work, made an important discovery of a hitherto unremarked incident in the early career of that Father. He was triumphantly proceeding to condense this invaluable information into two neat paragraphs—he had completely forgotten the existence of such modern subjects of interest as Lily, or his curates — when his first sentence was scattered to the winds by a hasty, not to say rampant knock at his study door, followed by the instant appearance of the parish clerk, John Griffiths. He was old, and at this moment, breathless, and his words came in gasps:

"Will you—excusing me being so hasty, sir—but will you come along to the church and marry that there couple, Lucy Brown and them? They've been waiting most an hour; and I can't get no one else. I'll tell you, sir—arterwards—excuse me a-hurryin' of you, but they're that nasty about being kep' waiting."

The Vicar grasped only the bare fact that he was wanted at the church. Seizing his hat and coat, he meekly followed his impatient henchman across the field which separated his house from the church, donned his surplice, and began the service mechanically, went through it in a bewildered way, and finally, having bidden the rosy, laughing girl who was the bride, to "be not afraid with any amazement," and superintended the efforts at penmanship with which she and her new-made lord graced the register, he sat down in the vestry chair to think over things, with the old clerk to help him, while she was escorted into the summer morning air and wedded life.

John Griffiths, after years of service, considered himself, and wished the parish to consider him, as the active partner in the ecclesiastical concern which embraced the Vicar as its useful but unimportant member. As to the curates, they were his thorn in the flesh. He disobeyed their orders on every possible occasion; gave them, in their presence, most grudging deference; and, among his associates in the village, invariably referred to them in their absence as "them boys." This morning he was thoroughly happy. He had a flagrant case of defection on their part to bring before their master; and he meant to impart the details with all impressive care and deliberation.

"I was a-settin' on the bench in my back-garden"—he began, as he took the Vicar's surplice from his shoulders and hung it on the old pegs which had held surplices for at least three hundred years —"I was a-settin' in the sun, when my missus says to me, 'John,' she says, 'that there couple's gone along. I see them from the window. You go on up to church, or you'll be late.' But they was so early like, I didn't hurry for all she said, and when I got there it was ten minutes to eleven still. So I waited and they waited, till it had gone eleven. Then I went to the gate to look for Mr. Maynard, knowin' as how you said a Sunday as he was to marry them——"

"And he perfectly understood me," put in the Vicar.

"But I couldn't see him; and I went back and waited a bit by the door. It was near half-past eleven when the young man as was to be married came to ask me if no one weren't coming to do it. So I went along to fetch Mr. Maynard; but he weren't at home. So then I went up to Mr. Smith's, thinking he might be there; or, if he weren't, I could tell t'other to come along. But they wasn't there—— Yes, sir, I'll see to them pens, sir," as the Vicar made an impatient sound over the copying of the certificates, which was set down by his clerk to shortcomings for which he himself was greatly responsible, having used the pens the day before in oiling a refractory lock. "Well, sir, as I was a-saying, they wasn't there, and Mrs. Brown, she says to me — never could abear that woman — she says: 'Go and tell your master to look arter 'em,' she says. 'Mr. Smith, he went out with

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Miss Heathcote at ten o'clock, to Friar's Dell; so I heard her say when she was waitin' in the road. And Mr. Maynard, he come along here askin' for Mr. Smith, and when I told him where he was, he just cut and run after 'em like mad. That's where they are, both on 'em; and if you want 'em I'm sorry for you.' So I came my ways, and never said good morning, nor nothink to her, never could abide her imperence, and I fetched you, sir, so it's all right as far as the couple's concerned."

The old clerk turned round from fumbling with the surplices and cassocks, and met the Vicar's face. The look he saw there apparently changed the current of his thoughts, for the old man began hastily to plead for his enemies.

"Bless you, sir, they ain't nothink but two boys, and not much at that. I wouldn't worrit myself so much; we was young once; and Miss Lily—well, begging your pardon, sir, I never seed nothing so pretty for a girl."

"Good morning, John," was all the answer the Vicar gave to him; he was absently looking for his hat and stick. When he discovered them he took them still more absently into his hand, and not until he was half way across the churchyard did it occur to him that a hat was more useful when worn on the head than when carried in the hand. As he stopped to put it on, his eyes wandered over the hills and moors before him; perhaps, unconsciously, they directed his thoughts towards the part of the clerk's story, which he had hardly remarked in the telling—the place which was the destination of the disturbers of his peace.

Friar's Dell was a tiny copse, about three miles out of Sweet Ancott. It was covered, in summer, with the rarest and loveliest ferns in the whole of Devon, it was said.

The Vicar remembered, with a groan, that Lily had said a few days since, at tea time, that she meant to make a fernery. Little had he dreamt of all the words implied. As he stood there, thinking, it suddenly occurred to him that he, too, would go to Friar's Dell; go to Friar's Dell for no ferns, no exercise, no diversion, but to meet them on their way home, and at least say to Mr. Maynard what he thought of this—this complete oblivion of duty. Smith, too, would certainly profit by the firm, calm, verbal chastisement the Vicar felt at that moment able and even inspired to give.

So he started briskly enough, and kept up a pace which lasted quite through the first mile. Energetic action was a relief in his present state of agitation, and, step by step, moment by moment, the spoken reproof for Maynard grew more forcible and well arranged in the Vicar's mind; so much so that he felt it would settle everything, and there would be no need to have recourse to that last resort which had, in the watches of his sleepless night, suggested itself to him, namely, to consult the Bishop, who was coming in two days to Sweet Ancott, to hold a confirmation. This was really unnecessary, he thought now, with a glow of satisfaction. Every man ought to be able to settle the affairs of his own parish; he of course would be able to do so.

He was strolling now in the middle of the road, gazing on the ground, as was his custom. Suddenly a kind of rushing in the air made him look up. Three figures dashed round the corner just in front and past the startled man, without looking at him, gasping as they flew. One was hatless. The hat of the second was jammed on to his eyes, and the third, a little in advance of these two, was a girl—a girl with curly hair standing out all round her hot face.

On they flew, and the girl's scarlet frock flew on in front to the bottom of the hill, where they stopped short at what was evidently a winning-post — some broken old wayside riding steps. The owner of the hat tore it off, mounted them, and, waving it in the air, said, in stentorian tones—borne on the wind to the breathless Vicar—"Three cheers for Miss Heathcote. Maynard, you didn't run fair!"

Settle things in his own parish! The Vicar sat down on the nearest stone heap and began to count the hours to the confirmation day. He would wait till then.

That evening, two other individuals in Sweet Ancott came to precisely the same decision. Mr. Maynard and Mr. Smith were sitting together in the rooms of the latter. They were having tea together in a fashion peculiarly their own, and much practised by them. The teapot reposed on the fender, their cups on the mantelpiece. From time to time, one or the other of them rose, grasped the teapot, walked about contemplatively for a few moments, then, suddenly finding his cup, filled it, drank thereof, and returned to his easy-chair. They had been arguing so hotly that a kind of exhaustion had reduced them to temporary silence. But it

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was very temporary, and Mr. Maynard broke it by saying, as he brandished the teapot in his hand:

"Well, Smith, you'll let me have the first chance with him."

"With her, do you mean, old fellow?"

"No, you know I don't mean with her. Haven't we just had that out? You're so abominably given to saying a thing fifty times. We've just decided that it is utterly impossible to tell from her manner which of us has the best chance, or if either of us has the faintest. She is always just the same to you as she is to me."

"She gave me her photograph."

"She's sent for one for me, so there. Come, this is childish. I mean to speak to him. I'm sure to get straight with him is the thing, and if you do that first, I shan't have a chance, Smith. He's put out with me about that unlucky wedding this morning, you see."

Mr. Smith put down his tea-cup carefully.

"What do you say to tossing for it?" said he. "It's fair, at any rate."

"Your landlady will come up, or something."

"Not she. Come on."

"All right; but it's agreed we leave it till after Thursday, any way?"

"We've settled that. Here's a shilling. Heads you; tails me."

Mr. Smith proceeded to toss with a gravity befitting the occasion. The first time it came down heads; the second, tails. The third time, by some unexpected twist of Mr. Smith's hand, it fell into the fender. Instantly might be beheld the spectacle of two reverend gentlemen in clerical garb peering eagerly and intently into the ashes of a very untidy grate. Mr. Maynard rose first, in triumphant energy.

"Heads!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "Friday morning I shall tackle him, when the Bishop and all the confirmation is well off his mind. Friday morning! Cheer up, Smith, it might just as easily have been you. You can have your turn at him in the afternoon."

This reasoning hardly appeared to cheer Mr. Smith, who relapsed into the depths of his arm-chair, and did not arise from it again till his clerical brother parted from him at ten o'clock.

The confirmation day was bright and sunny, and Sweet Ancott wore a kind of refined and elevated bank-holiday air, owing chiefly to the lingering groups of friends and relations who had brought the girls and boys who stood waiting by the churchyard-gate—waiting for the Bishop, who was rather late.

Ten minutes went by, and then his carriage drove into the Vicarage gates, and the Bishop got out quickly. Mr. Heathcote met him at the door, and took him into the dining-room, which was full of clergy, who presented that ill-assorted, confused appearance inseparable from a body of men whose only similarity lies in their dress. They were rather eagerly awaiting the Bishop. He had recently been appointed, and had not yet undergone the ordeal by fire of scathing criticism, through which the clergy are wont to pass their chief shepherds. His outward appearance told them but little. The man who faced the critical roomful as if he were unaware of any scrutiny, was a man in the prime of life; young, he might have well been called, for at forty-two he looked thirty-two, and yet there was a dignity and a firmness about that tall, thin figure, and the resolute, dark face with the keen eyes, that showed that whatever, in the eyes of his clergy, the Bishop might lack in years was fully made up for in power. He came rather slowly up the long room, and stood looking keenly about him, while a long five minutes went by in the arrangement of details. Then Mr. Heathcote carried him off to robe; and the confused group of clergy sorted itself into a still more confused procession—for into the clerical mind but little idea of scenic effect seems to enter; and invariably on these occasions the tallest man present will request the shortest available brother to walk with him; while the broadest, and most aggressively cheerful parson, whose whole physique speaks of a wide enjoyment of all mundane delights, will find some young emaciated Saint Anthony to bear him company.

On their return from the church they reassembled in the Rectory dining-room, where, as they drank their coffee, one after another of his flock sought the Bishop's pastoral aid. These moments are jealously seized and eagerly used by Vicars with refractory schoolmasters, impending schoolboards, obstructive churchwardens, and all the thousand and one hitches which occur in ecclesiastical machinery, and which, by virtue of his office, apparently, the Bishop must put right with a touch. But their diocesan won no golden opinions from his clergy on this his first public appearance in

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his diocese. He listened, but he listened absently to the many stories which came before him. He manifestly gazed, during their recital, at some object over the reciter's shoulders. His attention was obviously elsewhere; he confused schoolmasters, churchwardens, and aggressive dissenters together in his comments in a manner which greatly injured and insulted the sufferers under each separate infliction.

One by one his flock left him, with their grievances unredressed; and most of them spent the period of their drive home in saying, with variations, to the wife, sister, cousin, or aunt who had accompanied them:

"Most unsatisfactory; quite unequal to the duties of the position! Often the way with these new appointments though; too young, far too young: and fresh from a head-mastership. No parochial experience whatever—none."

Mr. Heathcote himself was taken aback when, the last of these ill-used mortals having departed, he said anxiously to the Bishop:

"I have several matters I should wish to talk over with your lordship, if you have half an hour at your disposal." And only received the answer:

"To-morrow, Mr. Heathcote, to-morrow. I am staying, as you know, at Elmfield, to-night, and shall have the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow morning."

Then the Bishop turned hastily round.

"Where is Miss Heathcote?" he said. "I have not said good-bye to her."

At about five minutes before twelve on Friday morning Mr. Maynard arrived, asked for the Vicar, and was shown into the study, where Mr. Heathcote sat with a blank sheet before him. He had done no work that morning as yet. Ideas failed him; argument, even on the well-beloved theme, was beyond his power.

Mr. Maynard sat down, leaning his stick slowly and carefully against the Vicar's writing-table. During his introductory remarks on the weather, the subject of his visit had rapidly divested itself of all that flowing drapery of graceful phrases in which he had clothed it during his walk thither, and, while he sought for it fresh garniture of words, he paused. In the pause, the mantelpiece clock struck twelve. The same instant the door-bell rang, sounding rather loudly through the quiet house. Another moment, and Mr. Smith was shown in.

"It's afternoon, Maynard," he said, sotto voce, as he passed him. "Afternoon now. You had the morning, you know."

Mr. Maynard glared grimly; but preserved a freezing and foreboding silence.

Then, after greeting the Vicar, Mr. Smith drew up a chair on the other side of the good man. The position of the trio was sufficiently remarkable. Mr. Heathcote sat at his writing-table, facing the door, his eyes fixed musingly on the old brown volumes which were all that came within his range of vision.

Mr. Smith, who was on the right hand side, and exactly opposite the window, had the wide, sloping, sunshiny lawn and the rhododendron thicket in the Vicarage garden to assist his imagination. Mr. Maynard, at the other corner, found his horizon limited to Mr. Smith's profile, upon which he gazed without any of the attention which that interesting object demanded.

There was a silence after Mr. Smith's greeting, and the Vicar glanced, a trifle wonderingly, at his two curates.

"Mr. Heathcote," began Mr. Maynard, at length, with a jerk which became a kind of twist of his whole person, when the Vicar turned his dim, enquiring gaze, full on him. "I wish—to ask you—I wish to—to—marry——"

"Excuse me, sir," broke in Mr. Smith, with a contemptuous look at Mr. Maynard, and a serene consciousness of his own prepared and perfect phraseology. "I am here to propose to you, formally, for the hand of——"

But Mr. Smith broke off all at once, got up with a suddenness that sent his chair backwards to the floor, and walked to the window without saying another word.

Mr. Maynard lifted his eyes from the carpet, whence he had been trying to extract a crushing declamation, and glanced in astonishment at his fellow-worker.

Mr. Smith's expression was undergoing a rapid and remarkable series of changes. It altered from amazement to incredulity, and from incredulity to stupefaction. Mr. Maynard looked steadily at him for an instant; then being unable, even at that moment, to resist the craving of his own mind for information, rose and followed him to the window, when his own expression rapidly underwent the same process as he caught at the window-frame, and gasped for breath.

The Vicar, having realised slowly that his curates, who had come to see him, were

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now concentrating their attention on some wholly different matter, and that matter one in his own garden, turned round his chair, left it, and joined them. Together, the three men gazed out of the window on to the sloping lawn; together, the three pairs of eyes met the sight before them. Coming up the grass was the tall, thin figure of the Bishop. But his lordship was not walking with his usual long, firm stride, his step was not his own rapid tread.

For one of his arms encircled a slender waist, his other was stretched out that his hand might grasp a little brown hand; and as near to his shoulder as possible, considering their respective heights, lay Lily's rough, curly head.

An instant later, Mr. Maynard turned and made an exit, in the course of which the Vicar's ink, papers, and letter weights came to one common ruin on the floor; Mr. Smith, in following him, caught in the carpet, tripped, fell prostrate, picked himself up, followed him out, and banged the door before the Vicar had realised that they had stirred. Then he suddenly opened the glass doors of the window as if to let in more air. But it was not until Lily and the Bishop had reached the threshold that he found his voice.

"Lily!" he gasped.

"Uncle!" she responded, with a mischievous ring in her voice, a laugh in her downcast eyes, and cheeks that matched her scarlet frock. "Uncle, he was coming—to call on you. I was in the garden and he——called on me first. You see, I knew him ever so long ago—last summer—and it only took a short call—to—to—ask me; and—you must say yes——I have."

NOISE.

The dweller in London — and to a lesser degree in any other of our large towns—has to put up with many annoyances: some of a kind which cannot be prevented, others which are certainly capable of being minimised; and amongst these latter there is none more aggravating, none more harmful than noise. Few realise what noise really means and implies—a disturbance not merely of the ears, but of the brain and nerves, is involved by the continual rattle and roar with which we are surrounded; and physicians tell us that nervous ailments are frequently produced—more frequently rendered doubly severe — by the continued tension thus called into existence.

It is only for a very few hours in the dead of the night that the Londoner is free from noise of one kind or another. In the small hours of the morning the rumble of carts and vans, on their way to the early markets, commences.

While most people would still fain be in the arms of Morpheus, the milkman arrives, and thinks fit to announce his advent by that fearful and inimitable sound in which his species delight. Presumably, it was once a way of pronouncing "milk;" but now the keenest ear would fail to distinguish the slightest resemblance to that word in the unmusical howl which issues from the milkman's iron-lined throat.

The boy who delivers the paper finds himself unable to discharge part of his burden at your door without a nondescript sound that seems based upon the more ambitious vocal efforts of the milkman.

The thundering double knock of the postman—an earnest of many more that are to come during the day—proclaims his presence far down the street, gradually approaching nearer and nearer until it sounds with a crash upon the portal.

And so it goes on all the day through. Every tradesman who comes to the door is distinguished by a different variety of yell. Butcher, baker, and greengrocer all announce themselves to the inmates of the house they serve, and of three or four on either side of it, with a characteristic, but invariably disagreeable noise.

When Gay wrote his "Trivia," he did not fail to make mention of the variety of sounds that strike upon the ear of one strolling through the streets of London; but what would we not give to-day for the comparative quiet that reigned on the banks of the Thames in the last century?

A story is told that, in the olden days, every one in the world agreed to shout at the same moment, so that it might be found how great a noise could be produced. The eventful moment arrived, and was marked by a silence such as the world had never known before, nor ever will again. Every one had listened to hear the rest of the world shout; and for once quiet reigned supreme. Nowadays, it is all the other way—every one shouts; no one is silent.

The railway-whistle fiend is perhaps responsible for the most aggravating form of noise that goes to swell the general uproar of the metropolis. Those who are fated

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to live where the whizz and rattle of the underground trains are within audible distance, find them quite sufficient to try the strongest nerves. But this is not the view which the engine-driver takes of the case. At all hours of the day and night he springs the shrill blast of his steam-whistle upon the ears of a long-suffering public; and however accustomed one may become to other noises, this is one which never loses any of its horrors. The abuse has been the cause of lengthy correspondence in influential journals; but it seems perennial, and will probably never be put an end to until some of the directors of the line are made to live where they are exposed to the torture which their men inflict upon others.

The noise made by children is twice as noticeable in town as in the country. A merry, shouting, laughing gang racing wildly down the road, is, in the country, a pleasant indication of the health and happiness of the little ones; in town, it comes as an addition to the already far too numerous distressing sounds, and makes us wonder whether there was ever a time when we, too, knew not the meaning of the word nerves. It is, of course, hopeless and foolish to expect that the city should ever be as free from noise as the country. Part of the penalty of living in a large centre of population, is the participation in those noises that must exist if life is to be carried on within its boundaries.

There is no reason why we should all, like Carlyle, call Heaven and earth to witness the depravity of every dog that barks, or every cock that hails the approach of dawn; but it is impossible to help thinking that something might be done towards putting a stop to the pandemonium which we all so cordially detest. Why should not every one, for instance, follow the example of a courageous friend of the writer's—as he is happy to say that he has done himself—and tell his tradesmen that, unless their assistants can deliver the goods they bring without any further noise than is absolutely necessary, he will take his custom elsewhere? The squall of the milkman, and yell of the butcher, would soon become things of the past; for these individuals would find that they must restrain their vocal efforts, and when the first unaccustomed feeling had worn off, would no doubt be as glad to spare their throats as the world in general would be to be spared the unmelodious sounds which are wont to issue from them.

The organ-grinders and the brass band are contributors to the great sum-total of noise, who should be put down with a rigorous hand. There are some people who take pleasure in listening to the sounds they evolve; but the most enthusiastic of them must surely find his enjoyment begin to pall upon him when he hears the same tune repeated time after time, with always the same false notes and disregard to time. One does not like to grudge any one a method of making a living, but in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century, the extortion of blackmail by these sturdy, able-bodied fellows seems a hardship which may reasonably afford an excuse for a growl. We do not hold the organ-grinder himself wholly to blame for the existing state of affairs. There are individuals who positively enjoy the gruesome sound of a barrel-organ, and who encourage the visits of its manipulator utterly regardless of the feelings of their more sensitive neighbours. Others make these pests of modern society welcome for the sake of the gratification which the discord of their instruments affords to the children of the house, and, by feeing them through the little ones, practically invite a weekly, or, it may be, even a daily repetition of the polkas and jigs, with all their dreadful runs and variations. Blessed with nerves of iron themselves, they never consider the positive injury which they are inflicting upon neighbours engaged in brain work which demands the most undivided attention; upon sufferers tossing on the bed of sickness; or upon nervous folk, who are rendered positively ill by the jingling din. There can hardly be greater torture to a really musical person than to be compelled to hear airs, beautiful in themselves, when distorted by the cylinder of a street-organ. If only those fortunate beings who are not distressed by the organ-grinder's efforts would consider that there may be a dozen people within hearing of his instrument who, for one of the causes we have enumerated, are almost driven to temporary madness while he whirls his handle, they would cease, we feel sure, from giving any encouragement to this gutter-plague, with the result that, finding his occupation gone, he would be forced to turn his hand to some more harmless way of making a living. These complaints may have a comic side to some people; but to thousands of others they are very real, and it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of lives have been shortened, while hundreds are

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daily made miserable by wholly unnecessary noise.

In the barbarous olden days, a favourite kind of torture was to roll heavy cannon-balls about the floor of a room over one in which the person to be tortured was confined. The din produced had the effect of entirely banishing "tired nature's sweet restorer" from the eyes of this hapless mortal, and sooner or later, the want of quiet, and consequent rest, deprived him of life or reason. This torture has not been left behind like the rack and the thumb-screws, but still claims its victims. The weary brain is kept on the alert by the rattle of cabs long after it ought to have passed into a state of obliviousness, and when the disturbance dies away, is roused again long before the amount of rest necessary to recuperate it and fit it for another day's work has been obtained. Even when the brief lull which occurs in the course of every twenty-four hours does take place, the mischief that has been done continues, and the sleep that comes is restless and broken.

Many people pride themselves upon the fact that they can sleep in spite of the noise of the wheels which dash along the streets outside; but they do not consider that, though they may be asleep, the sensitive tympanum of the ear still receives the impressions the sound-waves convey to it, and passes them on to the brain. This unconscious hearing of sounds while asleep is the reason of the feeling of unrest that is so often experienced after a sleep that may have been of even more than the requisite duration. Every Londoner has noticed the comparatively invigorating effects of a night's rest in the country, and has probably put it down to fresh air and freedom from the cares of business. But a more important factor than these has been the absence of noise—and the consequent rest that his brain has been allowed.

We have already said that it is useless to expect in town the quiet that is so great a charm of the country; but while we grant that a certain amount of noise is a necessary evil in London, we ask, Why should there be so much of it? If every one could be brought to recognise that they have no greater right to inflict an unnecessary noise upon a fellow-creature than to deal him a blow, a far pleasanter, happier, and healthier state of life would be possible in London and other busy towns than is now the case.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

"I REALLY wouldn't do it, if I were you," cheerfully.

"Wouldn't you?" A trembling hand, which had lost almost the power of obeying the desperate will that guided it, dropped nerveless, and with it went the gleam of a revolver's barrel. "Why?" after a moment of supreme stupefaction.

"Well! For various reasons," went on the first speaker, in the same calm, even tones, seating himself on the broken old table adorning the room, and looking with steady eyes into the desperate face before him. "In the first place, it is against the law of Heaven. That, apparently, doesn't trouble you much," as a fierce grunt—a choked imprecation against all laws, Divine or otherwise—broke from the man with whom he was so calmly arguing. "In the second, it is the act of a coward; and in the third, it would make a considerable mess in the room."

The other man stared round the miserable garret with raging eyes.

"It wouldn't do much harm here, at any rate." Then, turning savagely on the young man again: "Would it?" levelling the revolver now straight at that young man's own head.

"No. It certainly wouldn't," replied the latter, with a calm, but decided conviction, apparently not in the least disturbed by the slightly awkward position in which he found himself. "I never saw such a hole in my life," he went on, not even taking his hands out of his pockets. "No human creature—not even a dog—should live here."

"Yet I live here!"

The young man felt that he could pretty well explain why he did live here. It was the last lair left to a man with the habits indulged in by Charles Wilton.

In his study of human nature, Mr. Anthony Melvin, who had arrived a fortnight previously in London, from America, had been led to this miserable lodging-house in one of the slums of the East End. He had, as far as Charles Wilton was concerned, arrived only just in time. Opening a door in the house by mistake, he had found one of the tenants in the act of

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raising a revolver to his own head. It was a critical instant. If the young man had made the slightest mistake, it would have been all over with Wilton. Perhaps Anthony Melvin himself. For the desperate man only needed the slightest provocation to shoot first his counsellor and then himself.

Anthony, though his heart beat quicker for the miserable human soul so fiercely bent on sending itself into Eternity, walked into the room, as if the most ordinary scene were being enacted there. Before Wilton had time to decide whether he would shoot the intruder or himself, Anthony, in the most matter-of-fact tone, advised him to let himself alone, at any rate.

"Bless you," he went on cheerfully now, as the revolver still covered him, "I shouldn't do that either. I don't want any man to swing for me."

Wilton glared at him for a second in speechless amazement and rage. Then he burst into hoarse, tuneless laughter.

"Why did you come here?" he asked. "If it is to preach at me, you had better get out. If it's to see the holes human beings can live in, you can look round, and then go away and write an article on it."

"I'm not a parson; unfortunately I am not a journalist, either, or I might make some fine copy out of it. What an awful hole!"

"It's good enough to die in. I'm starving. Yes; I've been drinking. The last few coppers I had weren't enough to feed me; but they gave me brandy, which was food and warmth in one. Forgetfulness, too! Then I came to, and remembered that to-morrow I shouldn't have even this shelter; so I decided to put myself beyond the need of it. The parish will be bound then to provide me with six feet of ground;" and he laughed the same ugly laugh.

A sudden thought of other men—aye, women, too, and children, starving, despairing, perishing for warmth and help in this great East End, overwhelmed Anthony.

"There's a lot to be done here," he exclaimed, involuntarily. "I don't think I'll go back to Sydney, after all."

Tho man started.

"Sydney! Do you know Sydney?"

"I was born there," turning with relief to a less painful subject.

"I knew it once," sullenly; "before I came—— Why did you come and interfere?" with a return of the despairing rage.

"Because your time hasn't come yet," with an earnestness he had not yet shown. Then, in a lighter tone, rising from the table: "Come and take a walk back with me to my diggings."

He pulled out a cigar-case, and offered it to the man, who had been a gentleman once, too.

Wilton stared at him. But his eyes had lost their fierce bitterness. His lips twitched. Then, for the first time, he laid the revolver down on the table.

"You don't mean——"

"I mean that I want you to come with me. A walk will do you good; and I'll be glad of your company."

There was a moment's silence. Then Wilton spoke:

"I'll come," he said. "If you go back on your invitation, only say the word, and I'll clear out. Here, take that. When the drink is on me, I go mad."

He thrust the revolver into Anthony's hand.

The young man coolly unloaded it, and dropped it into his great-coat pocket.

"What is your name?" asked Wilton, when they reached the street.

"Anthony St. John Melvin, at your service," said Anthony, with a light laugh. "I ought to have introduced myself before."

"Anthony St. John Melvin!" Wilton stood still on the pavement, his face pale. He looked strangely at the young man. "I might have seen the likeness," he murmured. "To think——"

He turned and walked on hurriedly down the street, with a look on his face which made Anthony not care to question him.

They reached Anthony's chambers at last, and a good dinner was soon set before them. But Wilton, starving as he had been, could not do justice to it. When discharged from the Riverbridge Infirmary, he was still far from recovered. He had had an interview with Aston, who had supplied him with money to come to London. There, friendless and hopeless, weakened in mind and body by his late self-inflicted wound, he had relapsed into his old courses, which had culminated in this fresh attempt at suicide. As he sat in Anthony's chambers, trying to eat, he found himself every moment less able to vanquish the faintness stealing over him. It conquered him at last; and, two hours

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later, he lay on Anthony's bed, in for a fresh illness, while that young man, apparently accepting it as the most matter-of-fact event in the world, prepared to nurse the destitute, dissipated stranger, he had, only that afternoon, discovered in a miserable lodging-house of a back slum.

It took a great deal to upset the mental equilibrium of Mr. Anthony Melvin.

CHAPTER VIII.

FEBRUARY was drawing to its close. Riverbridge was full of excitement. The great social event of the year was coming off—The Bachelors' Ball. As it was the one ball of the town, it can be imagined the bustle and eager anticipation that reigned in its households. Aston was one of the stewards. Anthony Melvin, absorbed in the interesting task of nursing Wilton back to life, had not yet had time to come down to Riverbridge to see Daisy; but he promised to try and come to the ball. He did not mention the name of the man he had rescued; only saying, as an excuse for his delay in coming to see her, that he had found some very interesting work. Wilton, after three weeks' illness, was slowly mending. The day of the ball arrived. Aston, who had been into a neighbouring town, brought Daisy an exquisite bouquet of white roses and gardenias.

"Oh! How did you guess I was so fond of them?" she exclaimed, touching the creamy, fragrant petals with delight. "Anthony always used to bring me some when I went to dances in Germany."

He turned on his heel, and walked out of the room.

"It's his rheumatism," said Miss Ross, apologetically. "It's these east winds. Mine has been dreadful; but I don't say anything about it," with a half-suppressed groan. "If it weren't for you, I shouldn't go to-night."

"Please don't run any risk."

"Oh, yes; I shall go," hastily. Miss Ross had a new silk gown for the occasion, and was looking forward to the ball with as much eagerness as any girl in the town. "Brend would be vexed if I didn't chaperon you."

There came an energetic ring at the door-bell, which made Miss Ross jump, and Daisy run out of the room.

"It's Anthony!" she cried, with a glad laugh. "He always rings as if he wanted to wake the Seven Sleepers."

A second or two later she returned, followed by Anthony Melvin. Miss Ross looked at him curiously. She was really interested in the young man of whom she had heard so much.

She saw a tall, well-knit figure, and a strong face, rather plain than otherwise. Indeed, but for the eyes and beautiful square white teeth, some indiscriminating persons might have called him ugly. But even they would only have held that opinion when the face was in repose. When it smiled, or was moved in any way, the change in it was wonderful.

"Just fancy, Miss Ross," Daisy exclaimed, introducing him, "he very nearly didn't come after all. 'Important business.' What rubbish! I would never have forgiven you—never!"

The young man laughed, and Miss Ross wondered why she had thought him plain.

"Well, I felt obliged to come to bring you these. I was afraid they would get spoilt in the post."

He handed her a florist's box.

"Oh, Anthony! How good of you! It reminds me of our dances in Germany. How we used to enjoy them! And Mr. Aston has just brought me such a lovely bouquet, too."

"But you will wear mine," rather hastily.

"I'll put every one on, both of yours and his, if I look like a dancing May-pole," with a merry laugh. "Mr. Aston has gone down to those tiresome mills again, I dare say. But he will be back soon."

As they had not met since Daisy left Germany, they found plenty to say to each other. Aston, coming in for a few moments before they dressed for dinner, found them laughing and talking like a schoolgirl and boy, and making Miss Ross laugh too.

Daisy introduced Anthony. Aston's manner was civil, but cold; and Daisy was a little hurt by it. The dinner scarcely improved matters. Aston hardly said a word, and Daisy exerted herself to talk so that Anthony should not notice his host's moody silence. She and Miss Ross had decided to put on their ball-dresses after dinner, and so they retired to their rooms as soon as it was over. Daisy was dressed first.

It was a bitterly cold night, and she shivered a little as she left her warm bedroom and met the chill of the staircase. She ran downstairs quickly to hurry into the warmth again. She hastily opened the dining-room door.

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"If you marry her, I'll disgrace you. I'll bring the curse down on your head. It is darkening the house now——"

The fierce words reached Daisy's ear as she stood on the threshold. But the slight noise she had made had been heard. The words ceased abruptly, and the next moment the housekeeper appeared from behind the screen, and hurried to the door.

Daisy shrank aside as she passed through. But the woman cast at her such a look of malevolent hate, that it sent the indignant blood rushing through her veins. She drew herself up, and passed on into the dining-room, shutting the door on the retreating figure of the housekeeper. Then the anger caused by the intolerable insolence of the woman faded in a chill sense of wonder and repulsion.

Who was she? How dared she speak such words to her master? What was there between the two?

With a violent effort she conquered her disgust and anger, and walked on towards the further room.

But Aston, standing before the dining-room fire, caught sight of her. He called her.

For a second she hesitated, then came coldly and proudly forward. He stood staring at her as she advanced into the light as if she had been a ghost.

Her ball-dress was white. Soft, falling veils of tulle over silk. The low bodice and short sleeves left bare the lovely arms and throat. It was the first time he had ever seen her in full evening-dress. She seemed like a vision from another world. There was a half-wreath of white roses edging the low bodice. There were knots of them on the tiny, filmy sleeves. There was a great bouquet of them in her ungloved hand. The whole air about her was fragrant with their scent.

What was it that made him think of flowers at dead men's graves?

She was frightened at his strange look, and her indignation died.

"What was it?" she exclaimed.

"Daisy!" it was the first time he had used her Christian name, "how beautiful you are! How could you bear to stay so long with us in this gloomy house? What shall we do when you go away?"

"But I am not going!" scarcely knowing what she said.

"I am not mad," he said, with an attempt at a laugh; "but you made me suddenly think of the darkness of my own life."

"Your life? Everything seems to go so well with you. If you have any trouble," remembering how kind he had been to her, and infinitely touched by the look on his face, "can I help you a little? I should like——"

"You would like to help me!" He caught her hands in his. "Will you promise to help me if ever I need your aid?"

She flushed, stirred like a reed by the fiery breath of his passion. Her womanhood was waking beneath the force of his manhood, as the sun wakens a bud into the perfect flower.

"Will you not promise?" he cried, with passionate pleading. "I am so unhappy!"

"Yes, I promise," she said, faintly, scarcely knowing what she said.

Happily the door opened, and he released her hands. She drew sharply back from him, intensely grateful for the sight of Miss Ross.

The ball was held in the Assembly Rooms. They were old-fashioned and shabby, as were most of the houses and buildings of Riverbridge. But the entertainments given there were too few to make it worth the town's while to re-paint and re-decorate. But the floor was fairly good, and there was plenty of room. At the upper end was a tall, broad mirror, with tarnished gilt frame. Beneath it was a long seat, covered with faded crimson velvet. To this position of honour, Miss Ross conducted Daisy, escorted by the two men.

Their arrival caused a little stir in the room. Daisy's beauty and wonderful toilette, which was the prettiest ball-dress in the room, excited universal admiration. Aston, of course, was always an object of interest to the female portion, at least, of Riverbridge society; while the pale-faced, rather nonchalant-looking young stranger who accompanied them, and whose appearance was decidedly distinguished, also excited favourable notice.

Miss Ross was always popular, and managed to keep friends with the various social factions of a little provincial town in a manner that excited Daisy's amusement and admiration. Aston would laugh, too, with good-natured cynicism at her tact and cleverness, telling her that her time was spent in keeping in with the hounds, and running with the hare. To-night, she was surrounded with friendly chaperons, while Daisy, besieged with part-

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ners, found herself soon in the whirl of dances. Anthony had claimed four waltzes on the way there. Aston, who did not dance, only asked her for a square. In the enjoyment of the ball she gradually forgot the troubled sense of uneasiness which that strange scene in the dining-room at Bridge House had left with her. In a vague way, she had felt frightened at the promise she had given.

But by the time Anthony came up to claim her for his second waltz, she was enjoying herself thoroughly. They were both beautiful dancers—by far the best in the room, there being few really good ones, though most of the men present considered themselves as such.

At the end of the waltz—during which they had scarcely spoken, content, with the enjoyment of youth, to glide round with light feet and graceful, rhythmic movement to the music—Daisy laughed.

"That was delightful! My feelings were dreadfully wounded in the last waltz, so were my toes. My last partner——"

"He was 'immense'!" said Anthony, leading her quickly out of the room, as the closing bars died away, to reach a comfortable seat before another couple seized it. "I did pity you!"

"But you shouldn't! It was quite thrown away. At first I pitied myself, till I found out my folly. He danced—that young man. He whirled me against sharp corners; he jerked me off my feet; he alighted on my toes; he shook me till I was breathless; he used me to knock over part of the band——"

"Was that you who sent that band-stand flying?"

"I and my partner. And, when at last patience and strength were exhausted, and I begged for a little rest, he looked down at me with the kindest condescension, and said encouragingly: 'Oh, you will soon get into my step!'"

They both went off into a peal of laughter.

"He came from Leicester," she said.

"I should like to punch his head."

"Please don't. I dare say somebody there will like to see him again. Besides, there are so many other things I want you to do for me first."

"What are they?"

He was sitting, leaning forward, his arms on his knees, and gently opening and shutting her fan. He looked round at her as he spoke, his eyes very steady and earnest.

"Oh, heaps! Have you been trying to find any work for me in London?"

"There's plenty up there," he said, his eyes looking away for a moment, and growing very dark. Then, with a quickened note in his voice, he sat straight upright. "Oh, Daisy, there's such lots for me and you to do, if we only knew how to begin. Such sin, and suffering, and hopelessness! I didn't know what to do first," perfectly unconscious of the Good Samaritan part he had played to the wretched man he had found fainting on the highway of life. "All our strength, all our money would be less than a drop in that ocean of sin and pain."

"Yet every drop of rain helps to make a green blade grow," she said gently, with shining eyes.

They talked on together as they talked to no one else but themselves. The next dance began; but they did not notice, and Anthony was not engaged, and Daisy had completely forgotten her partner. It was the "square," that she had given to Aston.

She and Anthony were sitting down in the large hall, near the door. Aston came to the top of the stairs and watched them for a few moments. From the distance he could see how earnest and animated her face was; how absorbed they were in each other's society. He turned sharply away. He saw she had forgotten. His heart was full of rage and bitterness against the man who could make her so forget. He would not go down and claim her; he felt he could hardly trust himself.

When Daisy at last remembered her partner, the dance was over. She was full of remorse.

"He ought to have come and looked for you," said Anthony, with the slightest touch of irritation, as if he thought she was troubling herself too much.

"Oh, but I quite forgot!" she exclaimed, penitently, "and he only asked me for one, and I gave you four!"

Anthony made no farther comment; but took her back to the ball-room.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 47.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN AFTER-DINNER TALK.

THE dinner passed off very cheerfully. Hoel made himself charming, as he well knew how to do; Elva was a little quiet, but made an excellent hostess, and Mr. Kestell appeared to great advantage. He was so courtly, so gracious, his stories were always to the point and well told, that Hoel wondered how it was that he had not before noticed what a very superior man Mr. Kestell was, intellectually and socially. It was only Amice who did not contribute to the entertainment, for she was more silent than usual, though now and then Hoel found her eyes fixed on him, as if desirous to see through him. The look seemed to disconcert him; he even settled in his own mind that Elva's sister must be a little peculiar; but though on the surface all was progressing well with Hoel, he was decidedly rather nervous as to the interview he should have with Mr. Kestell. Evidently Elva had said nothing, for she tried to appear perfectly unconscious, and he was forced to make-believe also.

Now that he was fairly embarked, Hoel rather doubted whether he had acted fairly by first speaking to Elva; for, after all, when compared with Mr. Kestell's daughter, he was not by any means in a position to offer great inducement, in the way of money, to Mr. Kestell. Of course, there was the "expectation;" but, as we know, Hoel hated this, and would have preferred not mentioning it.

If he talked, laughed, and told good stories during dinner-time, it was by some happy mechanical process, which long use helped to carry him through; only when he was left alone with Mr. Kestell did the real Hoel feel that he was himself again; also, looking up with a determination to take his courage in his two hands, he noticed that his host suddenly became silent, and for a few moments seemed to forget Hoel was present, as he attentively examined the wine in his glass. The port was certainly irreproachable, and a queer fancy came into Hoel's mind that Mr. Kestell was superstitious, and was consulting the signs in the deep colour of the liquid. This strange silence and forgetfulness of his companion prevented Hoel from opening his mouth, and he waited till suddenly Mr. Kestell seemed to return from the clouds and to be once more himself.

"You came—I mean, you wished to speak to me, I understand, Mr. Fenner, about Vicary. It is strange you should have made his acquaintance; but I am sure it will be of great benefit to the poor fellow."

Hoel felt he could not talk freely about Vicary till he had made a clean breast of his own affairs; as well have it over at once.

"I certainly did want to talk to you about a little matter of business referring to Jesse Vicary; but I had better be honest and open with you, Mr. Kestell. I believe my chief wish to revisit Rushbrook was to find out——"

Mr. Kestell once more held the glass of port up to the lamp-light, and Hoel noticed that the thin white fingers shook a little.

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"Yes?" he put in, for Hoel paused—"to find out?"

"To find out if I had the least chance of success—I—I—mean whether you, sir, would ever entertain the idea of me as a suitor for your daughter's hand. I may as well say at once that my position in London is by no means a bad one. Without vanity, I can say that my name is well known, and that I am making a respectable income with literary work, also I have a fixed income as sub-editor of 'The Current Reader;' and, besides this, I possess three hundred a year of my own. But, of course, when all is said, I know I have not enough money to make my suit in any way——"

Poor Hoel! He had never before felt so small and insignificant. The riches of Kestell of Greystone oppressed him. He made another noble effort, however.

"Still, sir, my motive being, I assure you, one purely of personal love and admiration for your daughter, I only ask to be allowed to try my fate. As for money, I do not want any. I could keep my wife in an honourable position, and, if not rich, yet the society into which I should introduce her is of the best."

"In short, you are in love with Elva," said Mr. Kestell, slowly bringing down his glass and smiling so kindly that Hoel was captivated.

"Yes, sir, that is the long and short of it."

"Have you mentioned the subject to her?"

"This morning I tried to find out if I was not altogether distasteful to her, and she has given me leave to speak to you. Indeed, sir, if I might only have a chance, I could at least prove how deep was the feeling which prompted me to try, even though with so little hope of success, and yet——"

Hoel lifted his handsome face, in which so many good feelings were painted, and at this moment he was nearer being a great character than ever before.

Mr. Kestell rose from his seat, and walked a few paces with his head bent down and his arms behind him. It was a moment of intense anxiety for Hoel, whose pride could seldom brook long suspense. He imagined the courteous refusal of the rich man and his own shy pride. Then he tried to frame his answer. In fact, in those few moments he lived through a sharp experience of doubt.

Mr. Kestell paused suddenly, and Hoel, who had risen respectfully, was surprised at the gentle voice in which the old man said:

"Draw your chair near the fire, and let us talk this matter over, Mr. Fenner. We have seen but little of each other; but I have heard much about you. Never mind how. Everything I have heard is in your favour; and if you can win Elva's love I know my child will become the wife of an English gentleman. As to her, I must leave her free. Perhaps I am too partial; but it seems to me that the man who wins her will win a true, generous heart, and a girl who will be an honour to any home. Where she loves she trusts implicitly; but I hope—that is, perhaps, my most earnest wish—that my dear child may never be disappointed or deceived by the man she loves."

Hoel was much touched, and even more surprised, at the kindness shown to him; moreover, his vanity was—human nature being easily influenced—in spite of himself, a good deal called forth by hearing, unexpectedly, that Mr. Kestell had made private enquiries as to his character, and that the result had been eminently to his advantage. Few men could have heard such praise without having their own good opinion of themselves slightly enhanced. The confirmation of his own unexpressed opinion was most gratifying.

"But, Mr. Kestell, much as I feel your extreme kindness, I must not let you overlook the fact of—my very inadequate means?"

Mr. Kestell waved his hand very slightly.

"I do not undervalue money, Mr. Fenner; but experience has shown me, or rather shows every human being, that we cannot make the happiness of those we love best by money only. There may, even, be much advantage in poverty; but I do not wish my daughters to be married for their fortune. On their marriage I shall meet the fortune of their husbands with an equal amount—nothing more. When I die I shall leave everything to my wife for her life; then no one will accuse me of having in any way made my children the objects of envy or temptation to the avaricious. At my wife's death everything will be divided equally between my two daughters, save for a few legacies. You see, I am perfectly open with you."

Hoel seized Mr. Kestell's hand, and wrung it warmly.

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"You have taken a weight off my mind, sir. I was afraid of being looked upon as a fortune-hunter. Your words have shown me that you did not think this, or you would not have spoken as you did."

Mr. Kestell smiled.

"Then your mind is at rest, and you may try your luck with an easy conscience. In these days parents do not have much control over their children. I do not complain. I wish them to be quite unfettered; but I do wish you success, Mr. Fenner, with all my heart."

"Then I shall succeed," said Hoel, feeling almost annoyed that he had passed through such unnecessary anxiety.

"And if you succeed, I venture to predict that you and Elva will not have to suffer more than is good for young people from limited means. I was told about your uncle, Mr. Mellish Fenner's intentions."

"I never even give my uncle's fortune a thought, sir," said Hoel, grandly. "He is very peculiar in many ways. He may even marry. Anyhow, I am not the man to sigh after or count upon dead men's shoes. I would rather begin married life in furnished lodgings, than borrow on expectations."

"Whatever happens," answered Mr. Kestell, after a pause, "you will believe I did the best I could for you, I hope. Elva must learn to know you. I doubt if, with her, there is such a thing as love at first sight. Yet, much as I have studied her, I never can quite know how she will act. Perhaps my girls have been allowed to go their own way too much; but my dear wife has never been strong, and she has always been my first thought. Her daughters have learnt that they must give in to her wishes. I did require that of them; nothing else—nothing else."

The affection which Hoel had never felt for his uncle since the "if" had been uttered, seemed to spring up in his heart for Elva's father.

"And I am sure, sir, that is why Miss Kestell feels your love doubly. I have never known a father, but if—if I have the happiness of becoming one of your family, may I say at once that you will never find me wanting in love and respect."

"Thank you," said Mr. Kestell, in a low and much-moved voice. "I cannot tell you how deeply I feel your words. Go on and prosper. But now, before going into the drawing-room, let me hear what you wish to say about Jesse Vicary."

Hoel was at once himself again, feeling decidedly small at suddenly remembering that Vicary and his affairs had entirely gone out of his head during the previous conversation, and that had Mr. Kestell not referred to the subject himself, he—Hoel—might have gone into the drawing-room without a thought of the man whom he meant to raise from his unworthy surroundings. He hid his forgetfulness as best he could, though to the practised eye of Mr. Kestell it was visible enough.

"Exactly so. I forget if you know how I became acquainted with this young Vicary. He came to our office hoping to get a little work. We get so many similar applications, that you can imagine we have one answer always ready. Vicary received it; but, as I happened to interview him that day, something in the man himself struck me as remarkable. I can hardly define what it is. He is clever, certainly; but not cleverer than many literary aspirants we see often; and yet there is something about him which at once marks him out from the ordinary clever young man who wishes to rise. He is an excellent fellow into the bargain; rather given to preaching, I fancy, if one knew the ins-and-outs of his leisure moments. But all this—what shall I call it?—this too palpable earnestness, is merely on the surface; at the bottom he is very superior in every way. In short, feeling drawn to him, I procured him a little work, which he brought to us so extremely well done, and so full of originality of treatment, that our editor, Mr. Carpell, of his own accord, suggested to me to try him in our office. We have to employ several writers whose duties are rather varied, and who must be a good deal more than men-machines. Vicary will suit us excellently; and if he proves that his powers are beyond this post, we can advance him; if not, even this position which I am at liberty to offer him will be far more congenial to him than the one he now fills."

"The one I found for him, you mean?"

"Yes, he has been perfectly honest and straightforward with me. He told me the outline of his life, and all you had done for him and his sister; and he was glad that I should first mention this subject to you, though he considers that you cannot now care how he earns his living, as long as he in no way disappoints you. I suppose he has really risen by his own good conduct, though without you he would never have had the chance."

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Hoel paused, thinking that he had put the state of the case excellently well. He was not prepared for the result.

"I appreciate your kindness, Fenner; indeed, it only serves to raise my opinion of you. But in this case I think I am the best judge. Believe an old man, and desist from trying to draw Vicary away from his present employment which my interest procured for him. I have seen many men, and I know the world pretty well at my age; and I can assure you that you will only do Vicary an injury by suggesting this move to him; you will unsettle him, and in the future he will look back with regret when he recognises that this step was his ruin."

Hoel was entirely surprised; but he at once felt that Mr. Kestell must be mistaken, and did not really understand the nature of the offer.

"I assure you, I am only offering Vicary a much better position than he leaves; even if we did not require his services in the future, which is most unlikely, for we are very careful whom we choose, and our workers seldom leave us, yet the very fact of his having worked in our office would assure him a good post elsewhere. Where he is now he may stay till he dies, and unless he works very hard at supplementary jobs, he cannot hope to achieve even a small success."

"But it is certain; and you literary men, accustomed to a kind of lottery-life, hardly understand enough the great superiority of certain work over uncertain."

"But this is very certain work, sir," said Hoel; and then, suddenly remembering it was hardly his place to argue with his possible father-in-law, he paused.

"I may be mistaken, of course. We old people are sometimes prejudiced; if so, forgive me, Fenner. In any case, I cannot feel that I am justified in giving my consent. Now shall we go into the drawing-room? You may tell Elva all I said, but do not let my words bind her in any way."

Hoel rose; but before they reached the door, he made one more effort, if, perhaps, a feeble one, in the interest of Vicary.

"Then you will not recommend Jesse Vicary to accept our offer?"

"No, I shall not recommend it. I shall, in fact, refuse my consent."

Then Mr. Kestell opened the drawing-room door, and Hoel saw Elva standing near the window, looking like a beautiful embodiment of life, and Vicary and his affairs faded from his mind.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

WHITEHALL.

WHEN the last leaves of autumn have been swept up, and the country looks damp and drear, the time begins for rambles over the pavements and voyages of discovery among the streets of London; about the old, pleasant, familiar streets; about the new London which is rising, storey upon storey, amidst a forest of scaffolding and out of deep, cavernous foundations. And if we find ourselves, at some idle time, in the midst of patches of sunshine and wreaths of vapour, say at the corner of the Thames Embankment by Westminster Bridge, the scene before us is one not easily to be matched.

It is not necessary to rise before daybreak to make the pilgrimage, although we have Wordsworth's testimony that

> Earth has not anything to show more fair

than a sunrise seen from Westminster Bridge. But for us, the turbid stream of traffic is even more attractive—the full pulse of that mighty heart, whirling along in so many different channels, here meeting and there dividing, and making itself heard in a continued roar and clutter. Above, in solemn stillness, rise the pinnacles and high towers of the great buildings that enshrine so much of our national life and of the traditions of its history. Grouped in one imposing mass we have the Palace, the Hall, the Abbey, dignified by all their associations.

Turning the other way we have the river, reflecting the suffused brightness of the sky, and flooding upwards with trains of funereal barges, and beyond, a black, irregular shore, with chimneys, spires, and tall factories rising in a dark, clustered mass, with wafts of white steam showing against a background of hazy gloom. But, looking down the stream, the eye takes in that gracious curve of the river

> Where two fair cities bend
> Their ample bow.

Beautiful must have been that curve in days of old, when the river glided at its own sweet will, when the Strand sloped down to the pebbly margin of the stream, here tufted with trees and there terraced in gardens, while the hundred spires of the City—great St. Paul's, conspicuous then as now—shone out in rivalry to the towers and turrets of the Court. The river, then gay with the barges of King and nobles, and of rich citizens, and with the hundreds of

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boats that plied to and fro with passengers of every degree.

Yet, if the river has lost something in grace of contour from the rigid line of the Embankment, it must be admitted that we have here a noble terrace, which we may hope will be shaded in years to come by full-grown trees. But the Embankment, and especially this Westminster end of it, is not so well frequented as might be expected. Heavy traffic flows along it, loaded carts and vans appear in a continuous stream; but it lacks something of the brightness and charm that should be the attributes of such a noble promenade. And something of the reason for this may be guessed at in the course of a walk along the Embankment from Westminster Bridge to Charing Cross; the Embankment is hemmed in all the way by dead walls, without any opening at all towards Whitehall. Perhaps you are not likely to meet with a mad bull along the Embankment, but a mob of roughs and thieves is quite as formidable, and there would be no escape except by jumping into the river. And thus, instead of fine streets and noble avenues opening from Whitehall to the river, we have to put up with this "cut-throat lane," with the dark river on one side, and a blank wall on the other. The actual blame for this terrible mistake in laying out the Embankment, is to be apportioned between the old defunct Board of Works and the Government department which deals with Crown lands.

For it is the old Palace of Whitehall that sits thus heavily upon the Embankment, the old Palace all cut up into streets, terraces, and gardens, but still retaining much of its ancient contour, and with its unbroken, privileged frontage to the river. A turn up Whitehall Place brings us into the thick of it, with Scotland Yard on one hand, where the Metropolitan Police occupy the quarters of the ancient Marshalsea of the Palace, as when the Lord Chamberlain in Shakespeare's "Henry the Eighth" threatens the unruly crowd:

> I'll find
> A Marshalsea shall hold ye play these two months.

The chief courtyards of the old Palace are still existing with narrow passages between, and coming out into the broad thoroughfare of Whitehall, we can reconstruct the ancient Palace to the mind's eye without much difficulty.

The broadway of Whitehall existed in its days of Royal State, and formed at once a public way and an entrance-court to the Palace. The banqueting-house still remains to us a fragment of that magnificent new Whitehall designed by Inigo Jones, but which never advanced beyond this first step. Looking downwards from Charing Cross, the passage on this side of the banqueting-house held the chief gateway of the Palace, leading into the main courtyard, now Whitehall Yard, at the bottom of which, next the river, were the great hall and chapel. Thereabouts, the King's lodgings occupied the river front. Other courtyards are reached by narrow, arched passages, with a labyrinth of buildings all round, lodgings of Royalties and of great lords, with their separate offices and belongings. Here are pantry, buttery, wine and beer-cellars of vast extent, kitchens, bakehouses, wood-yards, wharves, mixed up with the great offices of State, the council and treasury chambers. Here is the great centre of affairs, the mart of offices and honours, the market-place of titles, bishoprics, and dignities.

Returning to the public road, we may note on the other side of the broadway a number of buildings, still belonging to the Palace, the site of which are sufficiently evident in modern Whitehall. Since the Restoration, His Majesty has built a house for his newly-raised regiment of Horse Guards, and a smaller house for the Foot Guards, and these upon the site of the old tilt-yard, where, but a short century ago—speaking from the days of the Merry Monarch—jousts and passages of arms were held, and triumphs and pageants affected all the forms of ancient chivalry. A small portion of the tilt-yard remained uncovered by buildings, and afforded an opening into St. James's Park. But here, just beyond the present Horse Guards and the banqueting-house, Whitehall suddenly came to an end, closed by the great long gallery built by Henry the Eighth, "'thwart the streete," and the public road, passed under a handsome gateway built by the same Monarch—after Holbein's designs, it is said—and so closed in on one side—the left—by the wall of the Palace gardens, and on the other by Henry's new tennis-court and Cockpit Buildings, passed out of the Palace precincts by another gate, a quaint anomalous structure, crowned by pepper-box turrets, into King Street. And King Street we have still with us, the original, perhaps, of the numerous King Streets up and down the land—for that way rode our ancient monarchs from the days of the Confessor downwards, on their

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way to their chief Palace of Westminster. As for the Tennis Court and Cockpit, their sites are marked by the handsome row of public offices on this side of Downing Street, and the front of the huge and recent pile of Government buildings, Foreign and India Offices, impinges upon the site of the ancient "street" between the two gateways.

As for the ancient history of the vast Palace of Whitehall, we may consult worthy Master Howell, historiographer to the King, who will tell us that it belonged of old "to Hubert de Bugh, earl of Kent, and Justicier of England, who gave it to the Black Fryers, in Holborne; but being fallen to Henry 8, ordained it to be called an honour, and built there a huge, long gallery, with two gate-houses," as we have already seen.

But we may recall a memory of Hubert de Burgh, in connection with this seat of his along the highway to Westminster.

Long ago, in 1222, there were, as now, bitter feuds between the various neighbouring communities about London; feuds continued to our own days, by bands of roughs; but in earlier times the citizens themselves took part in the frays. Thus Constantine, a citizen of London, marched at the head of the populace of the City, to Westminster, shouting the war-cry of the French, "Mountjoye Saint Denis" and fell upon the men of Westminster. Then there was a great tumult before the very doors of the Chief Justice.

Next day, Hubert, dissembling his rage, went down the river to the Tower, and sent a courteous invitation to Constantine and others of the leaders of the populace to meet him there. The citizens incautiously ventured into the ogre's castle, when Hubert forthwith hanged them all, and, seizing upon others of the rioters, cut off their hands and ears, and turned them out as a warning to the rest.

This Hubert, by the way, seems to have married a daughter of a King of Scotland, one of two Princesses for whom King John had undertaken to find husbands, and, possibly, this Scotch Princess may have had something to do with Scotland Yard.

Old Stowe, however, gives us another account of the origin of that name, and says that the Yard was first given by King Edgar of the Saxons to Kenneth, King of Scotland, and was resumed by King Henry the Second when he fell out with the Scots.

Anyhow, Margaret, Queen Dowager of Scotland, the sister of Henry the Eighth, "had her abiding there." And Scotland Yard it has been time out of mind.

As for Whitehall, having become Church property, as we have seen above, it fell into the hands of the Archbishops of York; and Wolsey built, and pulled down, and made a famous Palace there; and, at Whitehall, the King paid Wolsey that frolicsome visit, disguised among other masquers, the scene of which, according to Shakespeare, is the Presence Chamber, York Place, while, in a later scene of the same play—"Henry the Eighth"—the change of title is narrated:

> Sir,
> You must no more call it York Place, that's past,
> For since the Cardinal fell, that title's lost;
> 'Tis now the King's, and called Whitehall.

Yet, as York Place belonged to the See of York, and was no part of the Cardinal's estate, there was a difficulty in getting hold of it till the King's attorney arranged some device in the way of a recovery, as it is called in legal jargon, for which the Cardinal's signatures to certain deeds were necessary. These were wrung from the Cardinal with great difficulty while he was in disgrace at Esher. "Tell the King," Wolsey is reported to have said, "that there is a Heaven—and also a hell."

A tradition of the period connected with Whitehall, by the way, accounts in a happy manner for the fall of the Cardinal and the transfer of his Palace. It was in the palmy days of Wolsey, when he was virtually the Viceroy of the kingdom, that two functionaries of the rival courts foregathered and began to compare notes as to their pretensions. One was Patch, the Cardinal's fool, the other Will Somers, the King's jester. It was admitted that the King had no such palaces as the Cardinal's. The old Royal Palace of Westminster had been but a heap of ruins since the great fire of 1512. Bridewell, where the King was now staying, was of no great extent or dignity. But, above all, were the Cardinal's cellars superior to the King's; those noble cellars at York Place, some of which have lasted until our own times, while others may lurk unsuspected beneath the foundations of more modern buildings. Upon that Patch invited his comrade to come and see his master's cellars and taste the wines — the Ypocras, and wine of Cyprus, the Burgundy, Bordeaux, and all the rest. Will Somers gladly assented; and so, armed with gimlets and capacious goblets, the two fools seized a favourable opportunity when the cellarer was not looking, and slipped into the cellar where

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the wines were stored for the Cardinal's own use and that of his most distinguished guests. The jesters smacked their lips and began operations. Cask after cask was pierced, but neither amber nor ruby runlet trickled into their cups. The casks were full by the sound and by the weight, and yet were dry. Will began to suspect that Patch was making a fool of him. Indignant at his friend's treachery, Somers seized a mallet and knocked in the head of one of the casks, so that the trick might be made manifest. The cask was full of gold. At the sight both the fools took to their heels, for here was a dangerous secret, of which they might have cause to rue the possession. So frightened was Will Somers, that he rushed into the King's presence as soon as he reached the Palace.

"Nunkey," he cried, with his familiar leer, "the Cardinal has better wine than you. There is never a butt, and there are two score or more, but is worth a thousand pounds." The fool was ordered to explain, and told what he had seen; whereupon the King's yeomen were sent to seize the treasure, which could have been hoarded for no good purpose, and it was taken away in carts to the King's treasury, while Wolsey was a fallen man from that hour.

When Henry the Eighth became master of Whitehall, he extended the liberties and privileges of the Palace of Westminster to his new possessions. Indeed, it seems likely that Westminster Hall itself was the original White-Hall, for it is often so called in contemporary documents; and till the end of Elizabeth's reign the Royal Acts are dated from Westminster. The old tyrant died at Whitehall, surrounded by terrified courtiers, who dared not tell him of his approaching end.

Mary, his successor, took possession of Whitehall, and the Kentish rebels, under Wyatt, swarmed up to the Palace gate and shot their arrows into the courtyard, wounding a valiant lawyer who had donned armour in the Queen's defence. Mary and Philip, too, held high court at Whitehall, when there were "great jousts in the Tilt-yard," and more than two hundred staves broken in the contests. Elizabeth, too, made Whitehall her chief Palace, and delighted to witness the prowess of her statesmen and courtiers from her father's great gallery as they engaged in mimic combat in the Tilt-yard below.

When Queen Elizabeth died, Sir Robert Cecil, the ancestor of our Lord Salisbury, appeared before the gate of the Palace of Whitehall and proclaimed the new Monarch James the First. Of James's time is the only part of the Palace now left to us—the banqueting-hall, the work of Inigo Jones, which is now used as a Chapel Royal. It has never been quite satisfactorily determined before which of the windows of the banqueting-house the scaffold was erected for the execution of Charles the First. But the weight of evidence is for the centre window of the upper floor, an opening having been made in the wall immediately below it, through which a flight of wooden steps led to the fatal platform. Whitehall was then in full occupation by the Parliamentary Army, and a hedge of pikemen and musketeers kept the ground between St. James's Palace, where the King had passed the night.

As Lord Protector, Cromwell occupied Whitehall. Assuredly some havoc had been made among the treasures of Whitehall; the late King's pictures and works of art had been sold, and much that was splendid and beautiful had perished. Yet Evelyn, who was a staunch Royalist, visiting the place during Cromwell's occupation, finds it very glorious and well-furnished.

But it is the Whitehall of the Restoration that seems most familiar to us. We see it in the full light of diaries and memoirs—the gay, dissolute, sparkling, and yet often sordid Court. De Grammont takes us to Whitehall; he shows us the people inside, and the shouting crowd of linkboys at the gates. He is charmed with the linkboys. "The first time that I made their acquaintance," he tells the Queen-mother, "I engaged all those who offered themselves — so finely, that, on arriving at Whitehall, I had at least two hundred of them about my chair." He shows us, too, Whitehall on a beautiful summer's day: "The Thames washes the walls of the vast but not magnificent Palace of the King of Great Britain. It was from the steps of this Palace that the Court descended to embark upon the river at the close of a summer's day, when the heat and dust had prevented the usual parade in the Park. An infinite number of open boats, which contained all the beauty of Court and city, made a procession about the barges of the Royal Family; there were collations, music, fireworks . . ." Sometimes there would be an improvised concert of music and instruments upon the water, holding spellbound the numerous wherries which had been shooting past.

Or we may see the Court at high play in

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the grand gallery of Whitehall, the basset-table covered with gold pieces, and the beauties of the Court dividing their attention between their cards and their gallants. Among them all, the one charming girl with a reputation—la belle Stuart—who builds houses of cards while the highest play is going on, attracting to her side the gayest libertines of the Court, who supply her with building materials, which they filch from the gamesters. The Duke of Buckingham builds his castles against hers. He excels in this, as in everything else, and as for "chaff," which the Stuart loves, he is both father and mother to it.

Then we have Evelyn, who sees the end of it all and recounts it in his solemn note: The inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, and on a Sunday evening, too; the King toying with his dames, a French boy warbling love songs in that glorious gallery. The honest country gentleman lifts up hands and eyes.

Pepys does not moralise so much as his friend; but he tells us more about Whitehall. As a pendant to De Grammont's picture of the water party, we have Pepys looking from the roof of the banqueting-house, with Lady Castlemaine, spreading her plumes, close by. She is good-hearted, too, and flies to aid a poor wench who has had a nasty fall; but the King and Queen are coming by water to Whitehall, and all kinds of pageants are being enacted on the river. Then the Royal procession appears. "The King and Queen in a barge, under a canopy, with a thousand barges and boats, for we could not see the water for them."

Then we have the last scene of all for Whitehall Palace and the Stuarts—King James in his closet, pages and lords-in-waiting in the ante-chambers, black-robed priests hovering about, and at the door the mud-bespattered courier who brings the news of the triumphal march of William of Orange.

Yes, there was an end then of the grandeur of Whitehall. William of Orange hated the place, and so did Mary, his wife. It was all walls and water, she said. And then came fire to rid the new monarchs of what they so detested. Whitehall had often been scourged by fire. Pepys records in 1666, Whitehall on fire, a horrid, great fire.

There was another great fire at Whitehall in 1691, which burnt everything from the back of the gardens down to the water's edge. Again there was a fire catastrophe, a final one this time, on the fourth of January, 1698. "Whitehall burnt," writes Evelyn, "nothing but walls and ruins left." People noted, with acerbity, that a Dutch woman was the cause of the affair. She belonged to Colonel Stanley's lodgings, and had left some linen to dry by a charcoal fire, and soon the whole place was in a blaze. The poor woman lost her life, and eleven other persons perished in the flames, among them two Grenadiers on duty at the Palace. The fire broke out between three and four in the afternoon, and burnt all night long till eight next morning, when the flames had consumed one hundred and fifty houses, most of which were the lodgings and habitations of the chief of the nobility. There was a clean sweep from the privy gardens to Scotland Yard, and thus came to an end "a palace that, for riches, nobility, honour, and grandeur, might contend with any in the world." Only the banqueting-house and the Duke of Portland's house were spared by the flames, and the former showed evidence of the roasting it had received on its blistered walls for many a long day.

Much of the site of the Palace was granted away, from time to time, to William's favourites, who built themselves houses here and there. Montague House occupies the site of the Royal bowling-green; and, standing at the iron gateway that blocks the entrance from the gardens, we can almost fancy the level lawn restored, the figures of ancient days grouped about it, and the soft click of the balls sounding in the ears.

The gardens are still Whitehall Gardens, and are occupied by a row of quiet, old-fashioned mansions, with excellent gardens in the rear abutting on the Embankment. These lead directly into the old court-yard of the Palace. And just behind the old banqueting-house, on a pedestal, carved by Grinling Gibbons, stands a bronze statue of James the First. It is a good statue, too. James is clad in a Roman garb, and carries a truncheon in his hand, and has a good, thoughtful, and yet puzzled face.

Passing out where stood the old Palace gate, where is now a wide open space, where buildings of some kind are being planned, we come out opposite the Horse Guards, just in time to witness a little military ceremony that recalls, even more forcibly than the scanty relics of its building, the old Palace of Whitehall. The hands on the Horse Guards' dial, by which

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all the military clubs are regulated, point to eleven; and, as if the old building were some big mechanical clock, the first symptoms of the striking of the hour are accompanied by a general movement in the previously quiet and silent court-yard. The monumental sentries, sitting motionless on their chargers within their cold stone niches in front of the Horse Guards, at once give signs of life, the horses prick their ears, the men shake their nodding plumes, as, with the clatter of hoofs and the sharp ring of the word of command, the relief draws up on one side of the little court. The outgoing guard clatter out from their catacomb-like quarters, the Reds relieve the Blues, and the contrast of their uniforms with their shining breast-plates, glittering helmets, plumes, and magnificent jack-boots, makes a pleasing little spectacle. A small crowd collect on either hand, just as it may have done on any morning for a couple of centuries or more. A couple of Red warriors detach themselves, and ride in at one end of each stone sentry-box, while the Blues ride out at the other. The dismounted sentries have exchanged their confidences with each other in the cold stone corridors; the happy Blues mount and join their troop. The men count themselves over; they are all right, and away they go to barracks, while the remaining Reds swing themselves from their horses and disappear within the resounding vaults. And this is guard-mounting at Whitehall Palace. It has no other raison d'être than the old burnt Palace, the old banqueting-house, with its grim memories of the scaffold—the ghosts of dead and gone Royalties, that haunt this historic ground.

And so we may pass through the resounding arches of the Horse Guards. It is not ancient as buildings go; dates from 1750, with Kent as architect. But it has a venerable appearance, too; its masonry weathered and worn, with the lion and unicorn a little damaged by the gusts of a good many winters, and sparrows twittering about the Royal crowns. The place seems shrunken, too, since the big buildings about have risen to such heights; but there is a quiet, homely character about it that we should be sorry to miss.

The trees are all bare in St. James's Park, but the shrubs and autumn flowers still show bravely along the borders; and the ducks and other wild-fowl are quacking loudly, and diving and splashing in the great pool. This was a straight canal in King Charles's days; and between the canal and Birdcage Walk was Duck Island, a large decoy, planted with trees, and with sluices and channels running here and there. The isle had a Governor once, St. Evremond, one of the queer Frenchmen who hung about the Court of Whitehall—a wit, a poet, a gentleman of nicety and honour, yet earning his pension by services, surely of dubious character. Andrew Marvell celebrates the decoy in his "Royal Resolutions:"

> I'll have a fine pond, with a pretty decoy,
> Where many strange fowl shall feed and enjoy,
> And still in their language quack Vive le Roy!

The decoy, and the aviary with it, are kept in memory by Birdcage Walk, which passes into Westminster by Storey's Gate, named after Edward Storey, keeper of the Royal volary.

But George Street, which continues the line of Birdcage Walk towards Westminster Bridge, is a creation of the middle of the eighteenth century, when there was a general clearance and demolition of old rookeries about Westminster. The first Westminster Bridge was built at that time; Parliament Street was opened; and the approaches to the Houses of Parliament made fairly passable.

Had we visited Westminster before the date above mentioned, we should have found ourselves in a labyrinth of narrow, crooked streets, surrounded by the precincts of the Abbey and Royal Palace. New Palace Yard was really new when Rufus was King, and has always been an open space, from which rose the long, high roof of Westminster Hall, its front encumbered by a mass of houses, offices, and traders' stalls. The Abbey loomed out of the thickly-clustered roofs like some great stranded hulk, without towers—if we had come before Sir Christopher Wren's time, who designed the two western towers. In a line with the Abbey stood St. Stephen's Chapel, overlooking the river, and forming the staff of a cross, of which Westminster Hall was one limb, and the other that wreck of buildings behind it, the foundations of which belonged to the old Palace of Edward the Confessor.

St. Stephen's Chapel was a high Gothic nave of the Perpendicular period, with great window openings, and high clerestory.

Since the days of Edward the Sixth the House of Commons had met in the Chapel, removing there from the chapter-house of the Abbey; and all the grandest traditions of the great legislative chamber were con-

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nected with St. Stephen's. Thus it was a national loss when the old Chapel was destroyed by fire in the year 1834. The train that brought the conflagration had been laid so long ago as the reign of Elizabeth, when the Queen granted the buildings of the dissolved College of St. Stephen's—the dwellings of the canons, that is, who gave their name to Cannon Row close by—to the Auditors and Tellers of the Exchequer. Now, the Tellers worked with tallies of hazel rods — as bakers used to do, and do now in Normandy, for instance. With the baker, a long notch means a big loaf and a short one a small loaf, and, the rod being split, the customer keeps one half and the baker the other. In the same way, on the Exchequer tallies, there were hundred pound notches, ten pound notches, and so on. There was a kind of rough security about the system of old times, for, difficult as it may be to forge a bank-note, it would be still more difficult to forge a hazel rod.

Well, as everybody knows, there was a great accumulation of useless tallies, and it was determined to burn them, and the stoves in the old House of Lords were used for the purpose. Presently, all the flues were glowing red-hot, the beams and hangings caught fire, St. Stephen's was wrapped in the flames, and the morning light showed the site a mass of ruins; the rude vaults of the Saxon Kings, the cellars where Guy Fawkes had stalked with dark lantern and lighted match, all open to the skies.

Since then, we have had other great clearances in Westminster. But Abbey and schools have preserved so much of their old character that the mediæval glamour comes over one in wandering about those massive cloisters and quaint precincts. But our way lies in another direction, and we may complete our circuit about Whitehall by diving into the wreaths of steam that rise from the underground railway close by Westminster Bridge.

NICKNAMES.

Most of us, at some period of our lives, have, consciously or unconsciously, borne a nickname of some kind. Those too candid, unflattering titles with which we are dubbed in our school-days, how they cling to us, it may be until we are well into manhood; and even then it often becomes a matter of some difficulty to throw off a well-established sobriquet, be it pleasant or unpleasant, in the acquisition of which we had no voice.

The origin of the word "nickname" is, to use a pet antiquarian phrase, "involved in some obscurity"; but most authorities agree that the word has derived its present form from "an eke name"—that is, a name added, the "n" having become, in course of time, transferred from the article to the substantive.

Nicknames themselves are as old as the most venerable of chronicles. Kings, Divines, Statesmen, and, indeed, most eminent or public men have received, either from malice, humour, or revenge, sobriquets which have been applied to them owing, perhaps, to some singularity in speech, manner, or dress; and these appellations have clung to them through life with such relentless pertinacity, that, in many instances, the nicknames have become historical.

There can be no doubt that many persons are known by nicknames of which they themselves are quite ignorant, especially when the "agnomen" is of the uncomplimentary class. "Old Switcher," the schoolmaster, would be aghast if he could hear the private conversation of the playground and dormitory; and "Tightfist," the grasping Squire, would rarely hear his legal patronymic in the bar-parlour of the village inn.

Our modern surnames are unquestionably, in many cases, the result of ancient nicknames, as shown by such instances as "Redhead," "Goodfellow," "Longman," "Cruikshank," "Lightfoot," "Blackbeard," "Fairfax," and the like.

Diving into ancient history, we find Socrates figuring as "Flat-nose," Plato as the "Attic Bee"—so called because of the sweetness of his style; Julius Cæsar as "Bald-head"; Ovid as "Naso"; and so on.

Nearly every ruler of the Saxon period is known to us under what is practically a nickname, having reference to some personal quality of the Monarch. And the Normans were not behindhand, for William the First would scarcely be recognised without the boastful "Conqueror." History tells us, however, that the King of France jestingly saddled him with a less complimentary epithet, bearing upon his corpulency, and it was in revenging this that the "Conqueror" met with his death. Then came William the Second, named

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Rufus, followed by the familiar "Beauclerc," "Cœur de Lion," "Sansterre," "Longshanks," "Crookback," "Bluff Hal," and so on. To these might be added the numerous "longs" and "shorts" of history; but the foregoing will suffice.

If we turn our attention to Parliament, we find many of its members, especially those who have reached eminence or obtained notoriety, dubbed with nicknames which have become famous in Parliamentary annals.

An amusing instance is related of two members being nicknamed in consequence of both bearing the same names. Mr. Nicholas Fitzsimon (son-in-law of Daniel O'Connell) represented in Parliament the county of Dublin; while, at the same time, another Nicholas Fitzsimon (afterwards Sir Nicholas) represented King's County. The latter was an exceedingly obese person, whilst his namesake had a very deformed short leg and foot, which rendered him lame. To distinguish the two members in the House, the lame gentleman was called Mr. "Foot-Simon," whilst the member for King's County was known as Mr. "Fat-Simon"—a somewhat appropriate distinction.

It is also recorded that one Pierce Mahoney, an attorney of Dublin, who had an extensive practice in that city, and who represented Tralee in Parliament for a short time, contrived, in a few months, to introduce so many Bills that he was called "Bill" Mahoney—a name that he carried with him to the grave.

Two of the Wynns of Wales—uncle and nephew—were grotesquely styled in the House "Bubble" and "Squeak": the one from the extraordinary manner in which he spoke, which procured for him the name of "Bubble," while the other, who spoke with a whistling sort of utterance, was known by the name of "Squeak."

Coming to men of somewhat greater renown, we find George Savile (Viscount Halifax) popularly known as the "Trimmer," so designated because of his leading a party which vacillated between the Whigs and Tories. He assumed the title, however, as one of honour, vindicating the dignity of the appellation by saying "that everything good 'trims' between extremes, as the temperate trims between the torrid and frigid zones."

The Duke of Marlborough is known to us best, perhaps, as the "Handsome Englishman;" but, in his time, he was also styled the "British Pallas," "Humphry Hocus," and the "Silly Duke," as his popularity waxed or waned.

Harley, Earl of Oxford, owing to a constant awkward motion, or agitation of his head and body, is said to have been styled "Harlequin," by the Duchess of Marlborough, who maintained that "such agitation betrayed a turbulent dishonesty within, even in the midst of his affected, familiar, and smiling airs." The Earl was also known as the "King of Book Collectors."

Sir Richard Steele was commonly called, by his detractors, "a twopenny author," in consequence of his publishing at twopence that famous weekly journal, the "Tatler." In addition to this, he was often referred to by Addison as "Little Dicky."

Sir Robert Walpole was dubbed by his opponents the "Grand Corrupter," and the "Leviathan"; and Horace Walpole, in his letters upon Sir Robert, applies to him the sobriquet of "Bluestring," having reference to the blue riband of the Order of the Garter, which he was in the habit of wearing.

Most of us are familiar with the term "Single-speech Hamilton," a title which that statesman obtained from the extraordinary impression produced by the first and almost only speech he ever made during his Parliamentary career. Bolingbroke bore the designation of "High-mettled Harry;" while Pulteney, Earl of Bath, was contemptuously termed "That Weathercock."

A somewhat amusing instance is recorded of George Grenville, who, when speaking in the House in favour of Dashwood's financial statement, repeatedly asked the Opposition "where they would have a tax laid?" reiterating the enquiry by saying "Let them tell me where?" to which Pitt murmured the line of a well-known song, "Gentle Shepherd, tell me where?" It was long before Grenville lost the nickname of "Gentle Shepherd." Earl Sandwich enjoyed the distinction of being known by the sobriquet of "Jemmy Twitcher," as a consequence of his turning against Wilkes, whose intimate friend he had once been, when that member was persecuted by Court and Ministry.

Horace Walpole was entitled by Wordsworth the "Frenchified Coxcomb," and was frequently referred to by Disraeli as the "Puck in Literature," owing to his literary fabrications. "Ultimus Romanorum," too, was another sobriquet frequently bestowed upon Walpole. Cobbett,

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whose talent for nicknaming was unrivalled, found satisfaction in styling Canning "Æolus," and Lord Liverpool "Pink Nose." It is said of Lord Erskine that nothing teased him more than Cobbett's habit of addressing him by his second title of Baron Clackmannan. But Cobbett himself did not escape the satirist, for, on account of his admiration of Napoleon Bonaparte, the remarkable member was commonly known as "Boney Cobbett."

Sir Robert Peel was, for many years, familiarly called "Orange Peel," in consequence of his somewhat remarkable opposition to the Roman Catholics while acting as Irish Secretary. "The Runaway Spartan" was another epithet applied to Peel, who, at one time, was opposed to the Irish Emancipation Bill, but finally changed his opinion and worked in favour of it. In connection with the name of this Minister, we may be forgiven for introducing here a favourite joke current in the House at the time, when it was said there were two Lemons in the House, but only one Peel.

It is reported of Michael Angelo Taylor, a member of the House—who, for several years, was in the habit of bringing forward a motion against Lord Eldon — that, in replying to the great lawyer Bearcroft, he said, "that he himself, who was but a young practitioner, or, as he might phrase it, a chicken in the law, would venture on a fight with the cock of Westminster Hall," which sally obtained for Taylor the nickname of "Chicken" Taylor.

Dealing with Parliamentary celebrities nearer our own time, we find that the famous O'Connell was popularly styled the "Agitator," the "Liberator," the "Big O," and the "Great O."

Of Lord Brougham it is related that, while practising at the Bar, he came in contact with Lord Eldon, who persisted in calling him Mr. "Broffam." Remonstrance being made through the assistant-clerk, the Chancellor gave in at the conclusion of the argument, by saying: "Every authority upon the question has been brought before us—new Brooms sweep clean." Owing to a painful affection of the muscles of the face, Brougham was familiarly known in Parliament as "Harry Twitcher."

This brief summary of Parliamentary nicknames cannot be concluded better than with the honoured name of Lord John Russell, to whom the nickname of "Finality John" was given, in consequence of his having made the observation on the introduction of the Reform Bill of 1837, "that, while the Government considered it a final measure, it was not intended that it should remain a barren Act upon the Statute Book."

Upon one occasion, however, the whole House of Commons received the curious nickname of "the Beast," owing to its members numbering six hundred and sixty-six, which is the number of the mysterious beast referred to in Revelations xiii. 18.

By some abstruse calculation, based upon the letters of the name, this epithet was also applied to Napoleon; and has quite lately been revived by the opponents of General Boulanger.

Turning back several centuries, we learn that Boccaccio enjoyed the designation of the "Prince of Story-Tellers."

Crichton was styled the "Admirable," a title bestowed upon that scholar on account of his extraordinary progress in learning during his youth.

Cromwell, of all men, has had, perhaps, most nicknames applied to him—chiefly due to the facile invention of flighty cavaliers, when, with crumb dropped in glass, they would feelingly drink, "God send this crumb well down"—as, for instance, the "Brewer," "Copperface," "His Noseship," "Old Noll," "Saul," and many others.

Good old John Bunyan, too, came in for his share of nicknames, such as the "Tinker," the "Inspired," etc.

It may not be generally known that Admiral Vernon was familiarly styled "Old Grog" by the sailors, from the Grogram cloak he wore in stormy weather—hence the origin of the word "grog," he being the first to give to British seamen the recipe for that comforting compound. Dr. Johnson was known by his contemporaries under various sobriquets, a few of which were "Ursa Major," "Pomposo," and "Surly Sam." Charles Lamb, it is said, used to own that his vanity was sometimes a little tickled by being addressed as "Old Honesty," and "Upright Telltruth, Esquire."

Napoleon Bonaparte, as we are well aware, was designated "The little Corporal" by his adoring grenadiers; but in England such epithets as "Antichrist," and "that arch-enemy," were considered too good for him. Politicians, moreover, styled him "the nightmare of Europe." "Plon-plon"—Prince Jerome Napoleon—obtained that well-known sobriquet in

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childhood owing to his childish manner of pronouncing the name Napoleon.

The Duke of Wellington, like Cromwell, enjoyed the distinction of numerous popular titles, but of a somewhat more flattering character. In selecting the most familiar, we find him known as "The Achilles of England," the "Duke of Waterloo," "Europe's Liberator," "Saviour of the Nations," "Old Douro," and by the more lasting description of the "Iron Duke."

There are several curious instances in which the holders of surnames, who have obtained notoriety by reason of their office, have handed such names down to their successors as nicknames which have become as familiar to us as "household words." As in the case of one Dun, a sheriff's officer of Queen Elizabeth's reign; Jack Ketch, the notorious hangman; and many others.

In many of the colliery districts it is no uncommon thing for a man to be known among his fellow-workers solely by some mere nickname. Of some thirty men forming the crew of a lifeboat on our northern coast, it was found that thirteen of them were known only by their nicknames. In Lancashire, fifty years ago, among the lower classes, it was almost hopeless to determine a man's surname. Thomas Barton, the son of John Barton, would simply be known as "Tom o' Jack's lad," just as in Wales he would have probably become Thomas Jones.

It is certain that, although the surnames of families and men are now practically settled, we shall always find an undiminished stock of supplemental nicknames or "by-names" among all classes, due to the sly humour or malice of the inventor. A nickname forms a ready jest, and though sometimes carelessly flung, it may take tight hold, and may cause either amusement, annoyance, or serious pain.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

A NEW INDUSTRY.

When one sees that the Englishman, and especially the Englishman of country breeding and way of thinking, is on the alert to discern some new ground upon which he may pick up gold and silver, one may be quite sure that the old ground has been gleaned very bare, and that the prick of necessity is making itself unmistakeably felt. For some time after those first years of crisis, which we vainly hoped were destined to be but temporary, the British farmer was as one dazed by a crushing blow. Meat, wool, corn, and every other product of the land fell simultaneously and persistently, in defiance of all economic precedent; for was there not an aphorism thus expressed in rhyme:

Up Corn, down Horn;
Up Horn, down Corn.

Now, however, there seemed to be a race between Corn and Horn, to see which should first touch the bottom of the abyss. At first the farmer refused to believe that such a general collapse could last; but time has taught him otherwise. When, in despair, he began to seek a way out of his troubles, he found that in the supply of counsellors Fortune had not been niggardly to him. Probably, no man in evil case ever had offered to him so much good advice. The man of Uz had three comforters; but those of the farmer came in flocks. They spoke through Reports of Royal Commissions; through the Agricultural papers; and through those wonderful leading articles in our morning daily monitors—articles in which the names of Virgil and Columella would be mixed in a fine confusion with those of Coke of Norfolk, and Jethro Tull. Special commissioners wrote special columns on Crop and Stock, in which men who had been cultivating the soil all their lives were taught exactly when they should begin to plough in the autumn, so as to allow the land to be pulverised by the frost, and in the spring, to secure the destruction of the annual weeds. These gentlemen, living generally in some suburban district, would write, detailing the profits they had made out of fowls, or bees, or pigs, or tame rabbits, and advising the farmer to multiply the process by one hundred and reap profit a hundred-fold. Next it would be the land reformer, just back from Switzerland, or Hungary, or Norway, cock-sure that all would go well if we make a clean sweep—with or without compensation—and start afresh, after the model of the people amongst whom he had picked up his panacea. Next, the benevolent theorist, who had put his hobby to the test of practical experiment, and now called upon all men to grow cabbages, or flax, or sorghum, whether they live on the Norfolk heaths, or the Weald of Sussex, or Salisbury Plain; and statesmen, in moments of leisure, have been known to take up the wondrous tale of the virtues of jam, and bid all men go a-making it, oblivious, apparently, as to

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It is to the same root that we owe the Necken of the Baltic and the Nixies—the water-fays—of the German legends. It is to the Norwegian Nökke, also, that we owe the Wild Huntsman of the Sea, on which the story of the Flying Dutchman and a host of other legends of demon vessels and demon mariners are founded.

There is, however, some confusion in the nautical mythology between the original Old Nick and the popular Saint Nicholas. This Saint became the Christian successor of Neptune, as the protector of seamen. As Mr. Moncure Conway explains it: "This saintly Poseidon who, from being the patron of fishermen, gradually became associated with the demon whom, Sir Walter Scott said, the British sailor feared when he feared nothing else, was also of old the patron of pirates; and robbers were called 'St. Nicholas' clerks.'"

It is certainly one of the curiosities of plutology that the patron Saint of children who is still honoured at Christmas as "Santa Claus," should be the dreaded Old Nick of the seafarers.

These investigations are extremely interesting; but we must not be tempted into them too far, for the patience of our readers. We have, at least, presented them with an explanation of a popular phrase, and that was our purpose at the outset.

We must confess, however, to inability to explain a number of other marine personalities, who are as lively to-day on shipboard, as they were generations ago. There is, for instance, old Mister Storm-Along, of whom the chanty-man sings:

When Stormy died I dug his grave,
I dug his grave with a silver spade,
I hove him up with an iron crane,
And lowered him down with a golden chain.

Who was he? And who was the famous Captain Cottington, of whom it is related, in stentorian tones and with tireless repetition, that—

Captain Cottington he went to sea,
Captain Cottington he went to sea-e-e-e,
Captain Cottington he went to sea,
Captain Cottington he went to sea-e.

Who, also, was "Uncle Peleg," of whom a somewhat similarly exhaustive history is chanted? And, still more, who was the mysterious Reuben Ranzo,* with whose name every fo'cs'le of every outward-bound British or American ship is constantly resounding?

Pity Reuben Ranzo,
Ranzo, boys, a Ranzo,
Oh pity Reuben Ranzo,
Ranzo, boys, a Ranzo.

He had a remarkable career, had Reuben, according to the song. He was a tailor by trade; went to school on the Monday, learnt to read on Tuesday, and by Friday he had thrashed the master. Then he went to sea, and, after some ignominious experiences, married the captain's daughter, and became himself the captain of a whaler. But who was he? And how does he come to exercise such a fascination over all mariners, even unto this day?

This is one of the mysteries of the ocean. The sea is covered with mystery, and with phantom shapes. Every ship that sails is peopled with a crew of dim shadows of the past that none can explain.

* See "Sailors' Songs," ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, No. 1047, December, 1888.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX.

ANTHONY MELVIN spent a week in Riverbridge. His appearance there excited considerable interest, and there were plenty of invitations sent to Bridge House. The week passed quickly and pleasantly enough. There were many excursions to be made, too; and Aston drove them to all places of interest in the neighbourhood.

The day of his departure came at last. He was not to leave till a late train in the evening.

After dinner, when Miss Ross and Daisy rose from the table, he left it too, and asked Daisy to come for a stroll in the garden. He made the request very quietly, and no one would have suspected that the invitation was the result of a deep-seated resolve to have her to himself for at least a short time before he left. He was naturally a hot-tempered young man, though a ceaseless effort at self-control made him generally appear cool enough. But he felt this evening that he deserved a medal for the patience he had displayed during the past week. He had never once, since the ball, had Daisy really to himself. When they had been at home, which, owing to the numerous in-

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vitations and excursions, had not been very often, there had always been Aston, or Miss Ross. Anthony more than suspected that Aston had given the latter a hint not to leave them alone together.

Even that sullen-eyed housekeeper had stolen in on them once or twice, under pretence of getting something out of the room.

Many a time did this patient young man silently confound his host, and, it must be confessed, the others too; though he really liked Miss Ross very much. To-night he was determined to play a bold stroke. Miss Ross, for her rheumatism's sake, would never venture to offer to accompany them. And Aston, if he had any pride in him, would be ashamed to follow. His stroke was successful. Miss Ross made a shocked remonstrance, speedily silenced by Daisy, who said she defied mists and night dews. Aston's eyes grew black; but, for very dignity's sake, he had to let them go alone.

As Daisy, well wrapped up in her long fur mantle, stepped through the glass-doors of the dining-room into the garden, she drew in a deep breath. It was curiously like one of relief, and yet she had seemed happy enough at dinner. It was this brightness of spirits, and a strange, undefinable shadow in her eyes, which puzzled Anthony. He had noticed it, and wondered over it all the week. The shadow had never been there before.

"I do believe spring is in the air," she exclaimed, lifting her face to the sky, in which floated a pale, silver crescent.

"Have you been happy here?" asked Anthony, abruptly, as they crossed the flagged court to the path that led towards the mills.

"Yes!" in surprise. "Why do you ask?"

"I don't know. I've been fancying—do you know you are thinner and paler since I saw you last? And there is something different—I can't make it out."

"Of course there is a difference," laughing, but with a note of regret his quick ear caught. "I am growing older. I was only a schoolgirl then. I seem to have become quite grown up now." She gazed on to where the great mills loomed black in the darkness at the end of the garden. "I don't think it feels quite so nice. But that is foolish, for everybody must grow up."

This time there was more than a touch of regret. She was thinking of Aston; of his strange conduct the night of the ball; of his manner since; of little things he had said; of looks he had given when he and she had happened to be alone. She was growing frightened with a knowledge that was slowly coming to her.

"You ought not to be grown up," said Anthony, with a powerful undercurrent of anger in his voice. "You are only a schoolgirl yet."

"How very unflattering; and I am nearly nineteen."

"There's one thing, you are rich," with what seemed an odd irrelevance, "and can do as you like."

"Yes; thanks to Mr. Aston. He has been so good. I am glad I am rich; for then I can help those that aren't so lucky."

"Yes, it's jolly enough," suddenly feeling more glad than ever that he was rich enough to help others. Why, if it should ever happen that she needed aid, what pleasure it would be to be able to give it! "My cousin—the one who manages my affairs in Sydney—is a go-ahead chap. Very different to his father, who was a dear old slow-coach. He has doubled my income lately. I let him do just as he likes till I go back."

"Mr. Aston doesn't believe in speculating," said Daisy, with much gravity, not in the least understanding what speculation was.

"I wonder why Aston hates me so!" said Anthony, with the abrupt directness that sometimes startled and even confused his listeners.

"Hates you!" exclaimed Daisy, amazed and shocked. It seemed like a blow dealt at Aston's hospitality, at his kindness.

"Yes—he does. He hated me the first night I came, and he has gone on hating me worse ever since."

A conviction that it was so struck home to Daisy; for, with his words, came a whole host of recollections of the past week. Aston's coldness to Anthony; his constant, and what seemed almost wilful, misunderstandings of him; his quick, curt sarcasms. These things had hurt and vexed her all the week for Anthony's sake, though she had hoped, by smoothing them away with a laugh or a word, to prevent Anthony himself noticing. Now she saw, that, for all his apparent indifference, he had both felt and seen.

"You have been very patient!" she exclaimed, forgetting how she was betraying her own conviction.

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"No, I haven't. I have longed to knock him down sometimes; only he was my host, and it wouldn't have looked well. Besides, I didn't think you would like it."

They had reached the end of the garden, and had stopped unconsciously. They stood under the shadow cast by the mills. The house facing them, at the other end of the garden, looked cheerful enough, with the lights streaming from the dining-room and kitchen windows. But Anthony was not satisfied. He had seen and heard a great deal he had not liked during the past week.

He did not approve of the way that the housekeeper dogged her master's steps; he was furious when he thought of the look she had once or twice cast at Daisy; he hated the masterful way in which Aston usurped Daisy's society. Suddenly Daisy caught his arm.

"Look there, Anthony," she whispered, pointing at the slender plank bridge that spanned the mill-race, "there is some one—something there! See! it is moving!"

The mills cast a deeper shadow on the garden just here. The crescent moon shed only a pale light. The bridge was but a faint line over the dark water. For one second Anthony seemed to catch a glimpse of a white, misty figure standing on the bridge. Then it vanished, and he saw only the slight line of bridge against the dark background of the mills.

"Anthony, is it the ghost of that poor, dead girl? Perhaps I shall hear those dreadful, dreadful feet again. They say she always comes when they are there."

"Daisy, Daisy, my dear! What is it? Those footsteps. It is all nonsense. They are rats, or fancy."

"I tried to think them fancy; but I can't, Anthony. They were there last night. Didn't you hear them?"

He laughed; but there was just the faintest shame in his eyes. He had heard them; he had even risen to go and see. He had found the staircase empty and dark, and had been very much ashamed of his own folly. Still, the sound had been very real, and most eerie while it lasted.

He laughed, and tried to talk her out of her fear. But he was more moved than he showed. It was shocking to him to find her so nervous and excitable over a mere fancy. It was evident that the atmosphere of Bridge House did not suit her.

"You must go away," he said, imperiously.

Her face brightened, then she caught her breath.

"I can't. At least, not yet. I promised Mr. Aston that I would stay. It is little I can do for all his kindness to me."

A very uneasy look came into Anthony's face. With a swift flash of insight, he saw how Aston was playing on her generosity—on her womanly power of self-sacrifice. As he looked into Daisy's lovely face, he understood his motive only too well.

"Daisy," he said, moved by what presentiment or feeling he did not know, "if ever you want my help, send for me."

"Of course I shall," she said, simply. "You have always been like my own brother."

"Have not you been like a sister to me?" he said, with a laugh. But there was a slight frown on his face as he went with her back to the house.

CHAPTER X.

"So he's ruined, is he? That comes of speculating, and trying to make two fortunes out of one. It would have been better if he had gone back to Sydney and looked after his business, instead of fooling about here."

It was two months later. Daisy, her face very pale, had been telling the news that morning's post had brought her. Anthony had written that morning to say that he was penniless. His cousin had turned out to be a reckless, unprincipled speculator. He had had full control of Anthony's property—Anthony confessed now that he himself had shown the most culpable negligence of his affairs, with the result that he stood face to face with ruin. He dared scarcely trust that it was no worse. But he was starting immediately for Australia, to see into matters. It was evident, though the letter was laconic in the extreme, that he was suffering terribly at the fear that there might be dishonour as well.

Daisy knew that he would not rest till he had paid the uttermost farthing of his liabilities, even if he were left a beggar.

The letter also said that he would try and run down to see her before starting, as he could not tell when they would meet again. The news was such a great shock to her that her guardian's callous speech jarred on her whole being. Perhaps he saw the quivering of the lip, for he flushed slightly.

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"It's hard on him," he said, more gently. "But it's the best thing he can do, to get out there and look into matters. That cousin is a scoundrel. There is no knowing what light Anthony Melvin's conduct may appear in."

"They could say nothing against him," with a flash of angry pride. "Anthony is the soul of honour, and every one knows it. He would die rather than do a base thing."

Aston's lip twitched, as it always did when anything touched him sharply.

"Circumstances may alter his ideas," he said, grimly. "Youth is always wonderfully tenacious of its—honour."

"Anthony will always be of his," she exclaimed, flushing scarlet, feeling the sneer as if it were directed to herself. "He would never forgive a base action in himself, or others—neither would I!"

Her guardian looked at her, his face paling, his eyes piercing, searching, commanding.

"Do you think that you and he are the only ones who value their honour—and the appearance of it?" he asked, steadily.

She flushed again, her eyes meeting his for a moment, then falling. She was always angry with herself for her cowardice; but she could never face that look in his eyes.

That afternoon, as Aston sat working in his office at the mills, he had a visitor: a short, slightly-built man, with pale-blue eyes and weak mouth.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Aston, rising to his feet, "Wilton, I thought you had——"

"Drunk myself to death by this time," with a kind of grim jauntiness.

Aston looked away for a second, and if murder could be in a man's eyes, it was in his.

"And to what am I indebted for the pleasure of this visit?" he asked, very slowly. "You don't expect me to start you in life again?"

"It won't be much pleasure to you, I'm afraid," he answered, rather sullenly. "I have come to ask you to do justice. It is time you made restitution of the fortune you are keeping from others."

Aston's face grew livid. But he still spoke quietly.

"What madness possesses you now?"

"It's no madness," and the sullen note changed to a stronger and more manly one, while Wilton gained a dignity of which Aston was keenly conscious. "The fit came on me again in London—I dare say you'll guess how your money went—and I nearly did for myself. Melvin found me and saved me. He did for me what no man has done for me for years. He spoke to me and treated me as if I were his brother. He did not recognise me. He was a little chap when I had to leave Sydney, and I'm pretty changed since I was his father's friend, and one of the most important members of Sydney society." He laughed grimly, but went on. "He did not preach at me, nor talk down to me. I owe to him the one spark of manhood left in me. He kindled it into life again, and I mean to use it in his service. I heard from him yesterday that he was ruined. That it is worse even than that, for a man such as he is. His honour is touched, though it was his cousin's fault. He feels that he should not have left the business so entirely in the other's hands. He must have money to meet his liabilities. He said very little, but I saw how cut up he was. I have thought it well over, and I have made up my mind that he, who has helped so many, shall not need a friend now. You must give up what is his."

"And you will end your days in a felon's cell."

Wilton paled, but his voice did not falter.

"I suppose so," he said, "if you put me there."

"I shall certainly—if you betray me."

There was a silence. Aston, that rigid stiffness of position relaxing, was leaning carelessly against the high desk. His pale, quiet face, looked as if he were assured of the situation. And yet in his heart of hearts was a vague doubt and unease. There was something new in Wilton. As he had said, some spark of manhood had been rekindled in him. There was a strength and a tenacity of purpose in him which had not shown itself for many a long day. It was true that he, Aston, could put him in the felon's dock that moment; that he had in his possession, carefully kept for such an emergency as this, proofs of the forgery which had originally placed Wilton in his power. But Wilton was a degraded man already. He had little to lose in life. And if Anthony Melvin—curse him—had succeeded in strengthening the voice of conscience which, Aston knew, had never quite died in Wilton's breast, then who could say what desperate effort to recover his self-respect he might not make? Even though that effort might cost him further degradation, and a felon's fate.

"Of course," said Wilton, in a rather

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heavy voice, "I know that I need expect no mercy from you. I can quite see how hard it is for you. But then you have known for years that you had no right to the mills, and I suppose your enjoyment of another man's money has not been unmixed. You can't be quite dead to all decent feeling, and you ought to have strength enough to do this act of common justice and mercy."

"Justice and mercy are fine things to keep a man from starving," with a short laugh.

"Cheating and lying, for that's what your life has come to, doesn't do him much good in the long run either." Wilton's anger was rising. "I mean to see Melvin righted. I should have told him yesterday, only I thought it but fair to warn you first, and give you a chance. You've got a good opportunity. It need not even bring any disgrace on you." He stopped a moment, then went on with an effort: "A little more or less pitch won't hurt me. I haven't any moral appearances to keep up. I'll bear the blame of the silence. You can act as if you only now knew; I'll let him think that I have only just told you the truth of the case. Then you can go straight to him——"

"And make myself a beggar, while you reap a nice little harvest from Mr. Anthony Melvin's gratitude."

Wilton's face coloured, and he stepped forward with clenched hand; then checked himself.

"I suppose you think you've a right to say what you like to me?" he said. "But don't go too far! You have done your best to drag me down body and soul to a gulf where your guilty secret may be hid. But you are beaten at last. You may do as you like with me, but Anthony Melvin shall know the truth."

Aston saw that he had gone too far.

"Wilton," he said, forcing himself to speak quietly, "you are master of the position. I don't say I give up the money willingly; I'd keep it if I could. I've worked hard and late at the business; and neither Anthony nor his father needed the money. But I've got to do it, so I must give in. I only ask for a few hours to think over my plans. It's not much to ask."

His voice grew stronger, and his eyes brighter, as a purpose formed itself in his brain while he spoke. The expression did not improve his face. But Wilton did not notice it; he was wondering what plans Aston had to form.

Aston read his suspicions.

"You needn't be afraid," he said, with a sneer. "You can see that I can't back out. You hold the winning cards."

"Yes. And Melvin shall know to-night. But I'll keep to what I said. I'll let him think that I only knew. I will give you three hours. It is now five; I will come back here at eight and hear what you have to say. I want to catch the nine o'clock train back to town. You can come up with me. He sails on Thursday for Australia. I believe he is coming down here before he goes. But you might settle the thing with him before he comes."

Something else must be settled before he came. Aston did not mean to lose love as well as fortune. He drew in a hard breath.

"All right," he said, slowly. "But don't fail to come for me here at eight. You may be the gainer," significantly, "if you keep faith with me."

Wilton flushed. Now that he was striving so hard to return to a better life, the thought of the forged bill held by Aston grew more and more burdensome. It was a bitter thing to feel that all his endeavours might be blighted at any moment by his arrest as a forger. He had not told Melvin who held the bill, though he had confessed the crime to him. But the bribe could not tempt him to forget the man who, in spite of that crime, had still treated him as a friend.

"Whatever my fate may be," he said, "it won't alter matters. You may bring that forged bill here to-night and burn it before my eyes, or you may come accompanied with a warrant for my arrest; it is all the same thing. Melvin shall know to-night or to-morrow."

"Will he?" muttered Aston, under his breath, as Wilton went out.

Wilton was no physical coward. Any thought of personal danger never entered his head, or, if it did, he dismissed it at once. Aston was no fool, to attempt violence—on his own premises, too.

But he little suspected the diabolical cunning of the thought that had entered Aston's brain. If he had, he would have gone straight away there and then, and never put himself within reach of Aston's merciless grip again.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 48.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV. JESSE'S BENEFACTOR.

"DEAR VICARY,—I have had a talk with Mr. Kestell about the offer we made you. I am afraid he does not look very favourably upon it; but you will, of course, come and talk to him about it. I shall, in all probability, be coming to stay at Rushbrook House next Saturday, so we can discuss it again; and I hope I shall then get your final answer. We can quite well wait till then. I am off the first thing tomorrow, so Miss Heaton has promised to let you have this some time in the morning. Yours truly, HOEL FENNER."

Jesse Vicary was lying out upon the moors reading this note which a lad from the Rectory had given him, glad not to have to walk the extra mile on to the farm, but to spend the time in pastime of his own choosing.

Jesse had been very busy thinking of the future as he lay there, and the note had not made thinking less necessary; and yet, in spite of it, he was conscious of intense happiness because of the warmth and of the beauty of his beloved moors.

Who would not have felt happy in this spot? Noonday had come upon the great moor with its yellow paths and its delicious scented heather and gorse? Jesse could have accurately told you the time, and so, for the matter of that, could any person of average intellect, for the grazing cattle hardly threw a shadow upon the green grass in the upland meadows, whilst everything was bathed in a faint haze of heat. All at once the perfect peace was broken by the jarring scream of a pheasant in a neighbouring copse, and a few cocks crew from one of the squatter cottages on the moor; but these sounds almost seemed to enhance the eloquent silence of Nature. Jesse's eyes, which had been fixed on the distance, slowly travelled nearer home. Just in front of him rose a clump of withered black gorse stalks, and near to it was a solitary stunted bracken, whose yellow fronds slightly quivered when the light wind swept slowly round the hill-side.

"There are solitary beings in nature," mused Jesse. He was in a very contemplative mood; a mood which is the perfection of laziness of body and activity of thought. "That withered bracken-stalk, how did it get here, and that dead gorse? They look as if they meant to protest against the abundant perkiness of their fellow-creatures. I suppose there is a certain pleasure in protesting, but one is apt to get conceited over it. When Mr. Fenner suggested my leaving my present quarters, I expect I felt as that bracken feels, or ought to feel. Mr. Fenner has been very kind; I thought he could not quite so easily win over Mr. Kestell. I suppose it is hard to give up one's own way or one's own prejudices. He would prefer my staying where I am; but why? I do not ask him for anything. No, there are times when a man's gratitude may interfere with the higher powers God gives him to cultivate. I owe him much, but not that. I will accept this opening. Symee must have a home, and she shall. If I might go out into the big world, to Australia, or somewhere, where men make money, I know I could succeed; but then Symee would have no home; and yet I—I might grow rich, and come back with

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something to offer to a woman. But no—all these are visions; but, anyhow, this offer is fact, and Mr. Kestell cannot prevent my accepting it."

Then Jesse fell into a deeper dream. This time it was wordless; the vision that floated before him shaped itself into a good and beautiful woman; and though Dante could give words to his passionate homage, there have been many who, though dumb and tongue-tied, have yet rendered the same worship at a woman's pure shrine.

He did not now worry himself about this happy time of idleness. He knew it was good for him, and that he would be able to work with more courage from being able now to drink to the full the cup of nectar which Nature presents to those who will stop and slake their thirst. As he lay there, his fingers touched even the withered bents of grass with reverence, and his eyes, wandering slowly from foot to summit of those very tall fir-trees in the near foreground, noted a hundred particulars which true lovers only see.

Hoel Fenner, with all his literary polish, his exquisite taste, his keen sense of fitness, might have sat here and seen nothing of Nature's true beauty, and would have derived no other piece of wisdom from what he saw further than to assure the next person he spoke to that Rushbrook was a very pretty neighbourhood.

But Nature, who can do so much for her worshippers, has also a limited power. She insists on having an unruffled surface to mirror herself on when she herself is unruffled, and expects passion in other hearts when she herself is rocked by tempests. Do not expect her sympathy, for between her and human hearts there is a great gulf fixed.

Jesse found out this to-day, for he knew he must at last bestir himself. Nature would do no more for him than give him hope. He knew that he must have an interview with Mr. Kestell, and that Symee would be looking out for him; so he started up, stretched himself with blissful contentment, and then went down the moor towards Saint John's Church, on his way to Rushbrook House.

Here he suddenly encountered George Guthrie, who could often be found apparently wandering with no object; but those who saw this did not understand George Guthrie. He made a dart at Vicary, and greeted him warmly.

"Just the man I wanted to see. How are you? Enjoying all this sunshine. I've escaped from my cousin, because she has a meeting of good ladies to-day, and when they entered the hall some of them looked at me as if I were the old gentleman himself. I asked what the meeting was about, and my cousin looked upwards and showed the whites of her eyes and said, 'T. A. P. S.' 'Taps?' I said. 'No,' she said, 'Training of the Adult Poor Society.' Good heavens! Vicary, fancy how I trembled as more Taps flowed in! I felt I was a poor adult, and I didn't know what might happen to me. They each carried a bag, and were shown into the dining-room and sat solemnly round the table on high-backed chairs. I looked in through the window, because the whole thing seemed so mysterious to me. My cousin says it is a protest against Socialism. Now I fancy if they asked you to come and speak to them, you could tell them a little about the poor adults. Eh, Vicary? But it amuses the ladies, you know. I hear they are very sad because Miss Amice Kestell won't join them. They shook their heads off nearly, and declared she had Red Ideas. But all this is by the way. I want to know how little 'Liza is getting on. Her old grandmother was talking to me about her only yesterday. I said that I would tell you to call, if you would be so kind."

"Indeed, I will," said Jesse, smiling, for it was impossible not to smile at Mr. Guthrie's remarks.

"'Liza speaks of you as if you were the Juggernaut before whom she ought to throw herself down. By the way, an interesting fact turned up during our conversation. Old Mrs. Joyce says she remembers your grandmother coming to her when she, old Mrs. Vicary, first moved on to the Beacon. It was to borrow soap, I think; but the very fact seemed to raise her into another sphere. 'Mr. Vicary is a very fine gentleman now,' she said, 'but his grandmother once came, etc.' She doesn't think half so much of me because she says, 'you weren't from these parts, sir, and one cannot ever be sure of them as are stranger-born, though you're better than most.' Good gracious, Vicary, fancy any one trying to train the adult poor; where will they end? I should like to see my cousin in a cottage for a week. I shall set up a society of Taps; put rich instead of poor, and get the poor to form the Committee."

"My sister tells me that Miss Amice does a great work among the squatters in the forest," said Jesse.

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"Well, yes, they look upon her as a being from another world; and, to say the truth, so do I. Here, Vicary, this way, please; I see Miss Heaton returning from Court Garden, so the Taps are over. Miss Heaton thinks the poor ought to be kept in their places, and says I am too free with them. Now I think I can slink home up by the Pools; by dinner-time my cousin will have forgotten the Taps, and I shall be able to look her in the face again. Good-bye, and don't forget to go and see 'Liza's grandmother, and don't make out that she's overworked, because they would send for her at once home. Between you, me, and the door-post, the adult poor do want training nearly as much as the rich; their feelings are so tender. They are all heart or none."

As Jesse proceeded toward Rushbrook House, Mr. Guthrie's words made him think of his own early history. He would certainly go and see Mrs. Joyce, for now that he was a man, the subject interested him; before, he had never cared much to know more than the bare fact that his mother had died at his birth, and his grandmother soon afterwards; that they had come from beyond the great ridge of forest which seemed to him, when a boy, to be the boundary of the world; and that only two months before his birth had the old grandmother and her daughter moved to a house on the Beacon. Positively, this was all he knew. He had never even before now heard his grandmother talked of by name, for 'Liza's grandmother had been living many years away from Rushbrook, and had only lately come back to her son's cottage. Perhaps only lately had Jesse fully grown into the feeling of love of his own order; only lately had he fully realised that, however much he himself might rise, yet his heart was now touched by the true feeling of humanity which, if it is not stifled in the presence of the rich, yet only grows to its full perfection among the poor. Symee, he knew, had no such sympathies, and he did not blame her. He had won his own freedom by work, and could enjoy it in any direction he liked; she was still timidly groping after that sense of freedom which is not really free, but fettered by custom.

Jesse had won his victory by days and nights of work; a work which could not be represented by any visible result, for it was spiritual labour in a spiritual kingdom.

This was the state of his mind when he reached the house, where his thoughts would centre, he knew, now for many a year. He was conscious that he looked about him, hoping to see Amice Kestell; and he was conscious of disappointment when no one appeared; but in another moment Symee was with him in the avenue, and then his great brotherly love was all with her.

Symee's soft, gentle face was decidedly troubled, and as she clasped his arm after the first greeting, he knew something was the matter with her.

"You are late, Jesse, dear. I have been looking out for you for some time. Mr. Kestell is in this afternoon, and wants to see you in ten minutes; and then I have got leave to walk with you till six o'clock."

"That's right. But what's the matter, child?"

He often called her child because, compared with him, Symee was so young and weak, even though they were twins.

"Don't let's talk about it now. Tell me, how have you enjoyed your walk?"

"It seems to give me courage in every pore. I only wish—— But I'll keep all that till I've spoken to Mr. Kestell."

"Mr. Hoel Fenner was here on Sunday, and I heard Miss Elva say he was coming again. You may fancy how I looked at him, Jesse—because he had been so good to you."

"Yes, he has been very kind, and I hope we may see more of each other."

"Miss Elva was so strange and thoughtful when he had been, I can't help fancying——"

Jesse suddenly had the same idea, but would not allow his sister to say it; he was naturally unwilling to hear the secrets of others

"That's not our business, is it, Symee? Now tell me how you are. What makes you pale?—and you look as if you had been crying."

"I had one of my bad headaches, yesterday, and Miss Amice was away, so I couldn't ask her to cure it. Fancy, Jesse, she actually stayed up all night in a dirty cottage, with some old woman who is very ill!"

Jesse's heart gave a leap. He had often heard before of Amice's kind actions; but only now did they seem to affect him personally.

"Why do you speak as if it was very dreadful, Symee? You would do as much."

Symee shook her head.

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"No; I don't like dirt and poor people. I know it's horrid of me, Jesse, and I would do anything to please you, you know; but everybody can't like the same thing. Miss Elva can't bear poor people either."

Jesse was penitent at once. He often had to pull himself up for harsh judgement.

"Well, Symee, I promise you a very, very clean little home, even if we have to do with few luxuries. You don't mind work, I know."

Symee blushed and hesitated, then finally added:

"It's time now, Jesse, for you to go and see Mr. Kestell; and, dear Jesse, don't be rash."

"Rash, of course not. I'm not given to being rash, you silly child. By the way, Symee, if ever Miss Amice wants anything done for her in London, you must say I would be only too glad to go anywhere for her. I don't mean shopping," he added, laughing; "but if she wants things for her poor people, or——"

"I'll tell her; but now, Jesse, do go, and I'll be quite ready by the bridge when you come out."

Jesse tried not to feel annoyed by Symee's manner. Much as he loved her, sometimes her want of strength jarred against him; but the feeling was only momentary, as he said to himself, "I have enough given me for both. I believe it is the evil effect of having always to obey. There is nothing like being one's own master to teach one firmness. But she will soon learn when we live together."

The afternoon had slightly clouded over; the great brilliancy was gone; for what looked like thunder-clouds were rising from a long, straight bank above the horizon. Pile upon pile of hard round masses unfolded themselves with a majestic sweep which foreboded a storm. "But not just at present," thought Jesse, as the butler opened the door of Mr. Kestell's study and announced:

"Mr. Jesse Vicary."

Mr. Kestell was seated at his writing-table, and rose at once to greet him. So doing, his back was turned to the light, whilst Jesse stood in full view. The wavy chestnut hair, the frank, yet rather thoughtful eyes, the firm mouth — firm, though gentle—and the well-built, strong figure of the young fellow contrasted in every respect with that of his benefactor.

"Good afternoon, Jesse," said Mr. Kestell. "I am glad you have come; I was expecting you. Sit down and—I think you will soon hear reason."

Jesse sat down; but even this action seemed almost done under protest. He felt this was an important moment of his life, and he tried to prepare himself for meeting it. He would have preferred standing up and saying his say out boldly and firmly; but custom and courtesy often prevent spontaneous speech and action.

"I suppose you mean, sir—that is, I think you refer to Mr. Hoel Fenner's offer. I received a note from him at noon. He wrote it last night."

"After seeing me, I suppose. He spoke very kindly about you. I was, in fact, much gratified by his opinion of you; and he made an offer which I know many an inexperienced young man would have accepted without consideration. But happily, Vicary, you have an older head to think for you. I proved to Mr. Fenner, I think, that it would be most imprudent to throw yourself out of your present position on the chance of future—fame, which, as one knows if one has lived as long as I have, is often a Will-o'-the-wisp. I am not at all surprised, Vicary, at your being taken with the idea; but I have enough confidence in you to believe that you will not give in to this desire for change."

"It is no desire for change," said Jesse, very slowly. "I have long wished for this sort of work, and I have spent many hours in trying to qualify myself for some such employment."

"That is what all young men think. My dear Vicary, be advised, do not throw away certainty; do not oblige me to think less well of you."

Mr. Kestell's tone had not altered in the least; if he were pleading with Jesse, it was certainly not in the heat of the moment, for his words seemed very carefully chosen and weighed. Jesse, on the contrary, having previously made up his mind to be perfectly calm, was fast losing this state of feeling; he pushed his chair back and stood up, without being aware of his change of position, so much was his mind excited.

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Kestell, you do not understand," he said, with deep earnestness. "I do value your good opinion, perhaps more than anything else; at all events, more than the opinion of any one else. Have I not given you

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proofs of it again and again? You have done much, very much for me and Symee, and I am deeply grateful; but now I am a man, I have fought out many a battle alone, and at such times I have had no one to look to but myself and God. I don't wish to boast, but only to say that such things make one able to stand alone. I knew that from the time I first went to school I have had to look my position in the face. You saved me from a terrible fate, the fate of a workhouse boy, and to my dying day I shall remember this. And it was even more that you did for Symee. Thank God, she is now fit to stand alone; and here she has learnt nothing but good. Such things as these cannot be forgotten by any man who has a heart or a spark of gratitude in his nature; but yet, in spite of all this, Mr. Kestell, I feel that I am not any longer responsible to man for my actions, but to God. He has most unexpectedly opened this path for me; if there are objections—and every position has its objections—yet I will overcome them. You forget that it has also many advantages, and that if I refuse this offer, I may never in all my life get such another. If it were only for my own ambition, then, perhaps, I should believe I was mistaken; but it is for Symee's sake. Good as you have been to her, yet she deserves a home of her own, and if I can procure it for her, she shall have it."

"Symee will never wish to ruin your prospects; I believe she has too much good sense for that."

Mr. Kestell's voice was losing its gentleness; there was a slight increase of warmth in it, as if for a moment he were off his guard.

"Symee will certainly believe in my love for her. She will not oppose my wishes," said Jesse, firmly. He saw that nothing would now turn Mr. Kestell, and that the whole responsibility of the change must be taken on his own shoulders. Jesse was prepared to do this.

For a moment the old man was silent. He took up a paper-cutter and put it down again sharply. At last he, too, rose from his chair.

"Jesse, whatever rash thing you may choose to do, I cannot allow your sister to ruin her prospects. If you wish to retain my—my good opinion, you must stay where you are now, otherwise you must take the consequences for yourself. I shall also insist on Symee having fair notice and perfect freedom of action, and I have not the least doubt that she will see the foolishness of your proposed change."

"You cannot part us against our will, sir," said Jesse, slowly, whilst the hot blood mounted to his cheeks. "If I accept this post, I shall ask Symee to come and live with me, and she will come."

"I think I can judge for her, and I trust Symee will be guided by wise counsels."

"Thank you, sir, for what you have done for her; but I am her brother, her only relation, and I shall study her happiness, even if she is too gentle and too much influenced to choose for herself."

It was now Mr. Kestell's turn to be annoyed.

"Then I can but say my last word, Vicary. I entirely disapprove of your conduct, and I refuse my consent to your giving up your present position, or to luring away your sister from a safe home. If you insist, I shall wash my hands of both of you, and I think the world will judge between us; but I hope you will not in the future talk any nonsense about gratitude."

Never had Jesse seen his benefactor look as he now did, or heard him speak in such a stern manner. His face had changed—a deadly pallor overspread his features, his hands shook visibly.

"Is that your last word?" said Jesse, going towards the door, his whole spirit rebelling against the injustice of the man whom he had looked upon as nearly perfect.

"Yes; but——" a sudden change took place in Mr. Kestell's manner, and he held out his hand.

"Come, Vicary, don't go away in anger; think better of this, and leave well alone."

Jesse did not see the outstretched hand, so entirely absorbed was he in the question at issue.

"I cannot, sir; in this case I must judge for myself, and I deny to any man the right of judging for me."

"You refuse to be guided?"

"I do; I shall accept the offer."

"For yourself, perhaps; but Symee will remain here."

"Not of her own free choice."

"Yes, of her own free choice."

Jesse had reached the door; his anger, that had been for one moment modified, rose again.

"I must ask her myself, sir, and this question shall be decided between us. I can allow no third person to come in."

"I leave you both free, perfectly free;

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but remember, if once you take your sister away, from that day my doors are closed against you both. I will not speak of ingratitude, your own consciences are best able to judge your conduct."

Perhaps there is no accusation which an honest man finds more galling to bear than that of ingratitude. It acted so powerfully with Jesse that, without another word, he left the room, mechanically crossed the hall, and only woke up to the consciousness of where he was when he saw his sister waiting for him on the bridge. Her face was very pale, and she showed plainly that she was well aware of the drift of the conversation Jesse had been having. One look at his strangely-moved countenance revealed much more to her, and when he said:

"Come, Symee, don't let us discuss anything yet; let us get into a quiet place where no one will see us," she took his arm and followed in silence.

It spoke volumes for Jesse's self-control that he imposed on himself this waiting time, for fear of saying something he would regret.

MONSTER GUNS.

THE word monster is the right one for the big guns of the present day. They are monsters indeed—the product of the highest mechanical knowledge and skill, applied to most elaborate and perfect machinery, the result being an instrument of destruction almost as formidable to those who employ it, as to the enemy against whom it is directed. The huge creature is of enormous cost to produce, and is the trouble and despair of all who have to do with it. The world would be thankful to be well rid of it; but in the terrible competition in the ways of death and destruction, the monster gun asserts itself as an inexorable necessity. As long as we and other nations have monster ironclads, we and they must go on building guns big enough to knock holes into them. Some day, perhaps, the ironclad may be rendered effete, by new inventions in the way of projectiles and explosives, and then there will be no further necessity for the monster gun. But till such a consummation is reached, if Britain is still to hold the seas, she must have big guns, and plenty of them. Big guns not only for the great ironclads, so that they may hold their own against all comers, but guns as big and powerful for the redoubts and batteries that protect our naval stations, which must otherwise be at the mercy of an enemy's monster guns.

Comparatively happy and innocent were the days, not very far removed, when we could stack our big guns in rows for use when required, an occasional coat of paint being all that was required to keep them in a state of efficiency; and when a batch of guns could be turned out like so many loaves of bread when the occasion required. As long as the making of cannon was only an affair of casting and boring, there was no difficulty in keeping up the supply. But with the introduction of rifled ordnance, a new system of building up guns was necessarily adopted. And, curiously enough, this new system was a reversion to methods practised in the very infancy of artillery.

In fact, the big guns of an early period were of wrought iron, and consisted of a central core formed of longitudinal iron bars, enveloped by hoops. Such was the earliest of the big guns on record, the great cannon of Caen. This gun was made for the siege of St. Sauveur, a fortress occupied by the English in Normandy. The Castle stood among the rich but marshy plain of the Cotentin, prolific in beeves and butter. The fort was then deemed impregnable, and the siege, begun in 1373, had languished for more than a year. A blockade had been attempted, and the Castle surrounded with a ditch and bank supported by projecting towers; but the English had continually broken through the investment, sweeping the country of its cattle, and burning the faubourgs of Bayeux and St. Lô. The French then resolved to construct new engines of war, and bring them to bear upon the Castle. They had cannon, but they were of small calibre, and it was determined to create a monster gun.

Early in the following year the work was begun at Caen. The most renowned cannoneers of the province of Normandy were assembled, together with the most skilful iron-workers; and there was a great iron industry in Normandy in those days, one Jean Nicolle de Billy, a famous smith, who deserves mention as the earliest constructor of great guns, being charged with the superintendence of the work. Then began the forging of huge bars, which were welded together about a circular core, and bound by rings of steel. More than a thousand pounds of iron were used in building up

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this great gun-barrel; and when it was finished it was carefully bound round with strong cord, and the whole enveloped in hides. Evidently the cannoneers had not full confidence in the big gun, and by these precautions sought to lessen the disastrous effects of a possible "burst up." The cannon was finished in a month, the smiths working in relays both day and night, as well as three other cannons of a smaller calibre; and the siege train comprised also twenty-five cannons of copper, and five small iron ones carrying leaden bullets. At the same time the great stone balls for the big gun had been quarried and prepared, and all was ready to try the effect of the newly-created monster.

At the first discharge of the big gun the walls of the strong fortress began to crumble and to fall about the ears of the garrison. In a few days the place was found to be untenable, and the garrison demanded terms. They were allowed to depart, and embark for England with bag and baggage. The big gun had proved itself the master, and feudal towers and mediæval strongholds were thenceforth at its mercy. But people in England would not believe in the big gun; and the Captain of the garrison, one Thomas Katterton, was generally thought to have betrayed his trust for French gold. And some years afterwards, being publicly accused thereof, the matter was decided in single combat between himself and his accuser, when Katterton was slain, a result which was considered conclusive of the poor man's guilt.

The English, in their turn, acquired the art of making big guns, and Henry the Fifth, in his sieges of the Norman strongholds, made use of great cannon carrying huge balls of stone. Some of these stone balls were not long ago to be seen adorning the court-yard of the quaint old-fashioned "mairie" of Harfleur; while traces of King Henry's batteries, on the heights above, are still to be met with.

Later in the fifteenth century we hear of a "grosse bombard," used by the Turks, in the Siege of Constantinople, all in one piece, and weighing one thousand eight hundred pounds; and if we are to conclude that this was a cast-iron gun, it is a much earlier example than any in use among the Western nations. For, of the same period is the famous Scottish gun, Mons Meg, which still adorns the battlements of Edinburgh Castle—a built-up gun of bars and rings, after the model of the cannon of Caen, and, if tradition is to be believed, put together in the same manner. The story of Brawny Kim and his seven sons, who forged the huge piece for the siege of the stronghold of the Douglas — Castle Thrave, in Galloway—may have a somewhat legendary aspect; but that some such big gun was forged by the native smiths for their King, is probable enough; though whether Mons Meg be she is another matter. Meg was "crackit" at last in firing a salute for the Duke of York, in the old Covenanting times; but she had lasted well, and had done good service, if we may credit her record of having been used at the siege of Dumbarton, 1489, and of "Norham's castled steep," 1497; to say nothing of the more or less doubtful Thrave, in or about 1452.

It was not till the year 1545 that cast-iron ordnance came in; but its advantages were so great that in a short time it superseded all other kinds of heavy ordnance, and held its ground for just three centuries. And under the régime of cast-iron, monster guns were neither practicable nor desirable. It was better to have guns that could be readily handled, and plenty of them, than a few unmanageable monsters. Besides, there is a limit, very easily reached, to the size of iron gun castings. As for ships' guns, they were for long of but small size, and generally cast in brass or bronze. The guns of the Spanish Armada were small; but, judging by such specimens as have been recovered, beautifully finished, and, indeed, as far as excellence of work is concerned, it would be difficult to beat the gun-founders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the great wars and sieges of the following age, iron artillery was rapidly developed in size and importance. Yet in 1717, we find that Woolwich Arsenal had a foundry for only bronze guns, and that heavy iron ordnance was provided by contractors. As our great iron-works increased and developed, cast guns could be turned out wholesale, and improvements in machinery resulted in increased accuracy of bore and adjustment. Yet there was no radical change in the manufacture of heavy guns, and a cannon that would throw a solid spherical ball of sixty pounds' weight, with an effective range of some twelve hundred yards, was regarded with complaisance as the most powerful arm that could be devised for ships or forts. The great naval battles of Nelson's time were fought with guns of nothing like that weight of metal: a thirty-two-pound gun

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being, in a general way, the heaviest ordnance carried on board Her Majesty's ships.

With the general adoption of the rifled musket, which began at the date of the Crimean War, rifled cannon became a necessity for the artilleryman. Napoleon the Third rifled his guns, and by their aid he scored the victories of Magenta and Solferino. Armstrong in England, and Krupp in Germany, took up the manufacture of steel and rifled guns, and the processes of making great guns was completely revolutionised. Not that this change brought about the necessity for monster guns. That was indirectly due to improvements effected in explosive projectiles, and the consequent introduction of direct shell-fire into naval warfare. Thus in the first serious naval engagements fought after these changes—in the American Civil War, that is—it was found that an armoured ship, capable of throwing off an enemy's shells, held an ordinary unprotected ship-of-war entirely at its mercy. And thus the result of a few isolated combats in American waters threw the great naval Powers almost into a panic. From that time the famed wooden walls of old England were no more to be heard of, and a long and costly competition began, in which it was a vital necessity for England to take the lead. First, we must have ironclads strong enough to resist the most powerful guns that can be brought against them; and next, we must have still more powerful guns, to knock holes in other people's ironclads. Thus one monster begets another, and the huge, unwieldy ironclad must be armed with a huge gun, which is only not unwieldy because it is moved with elaborate and ingenious machinery.

Our first working examples of a really monster gun were commenced in 1878, when a forty or forty-three ton breechloading gun was designed. With all its weight of metal, the modern monster is by no means of the "muckle-mouthed" breed. The calibre of the forty-ton gun is twelve inches only, but it carries an elongated shot that weighs seven hundred and fifteen pounds, and the shot is driven by a charge of two hundred and ninety-five pounds of powder. Now, this twelve-inch breechloader, which may be called the handy working gun of the British navy, costs seven thousand four hundred pounds, as delivered from the great works of Armstrong and Company at Elswick.

Then we come to the eighty-ton gun of sixteen inches calibre — the "Woolwich Infant," as it was jocosely called on its first appearance—alas! that the necessity should arise for a bigger baby than that! The "infant" costs ten thousand pounds, as turned out into the world from the Royal Gun Factory at Woolwich. She is fed with a nice little "bonne bouche" in the way of a cartridge eighty inches long, that is, a head taller than the tallest of our Grenadiers. Then you have a shot five feet long, a conical, winged projectile, with studs fitting so accurately into the rifling of the gun, that if you could set that gun on end, the shot would gently sink into its place—a shot that weighs some eighteen hundred pounds, and thus itself heavier by degrees than one of the monster guns of old times. The bellow of the "infant" when discharged is like an earthquake shock, and the great bolt, more formidable than any fabled bolt of yore, goes hurtling through the air with the roar of an express train, and with sufficient elevation will fly for a distance of seven or eight miles. The powder used in the monster gun is in itself a monstrous kind of powder—not in grains like ordinary gunpowder, but in flakes, as cocoa-powder, in knobs, as pebble-powder, or in little cubes, as prismatic powder. These powders burn more slowly than the ordinary charges, and thus exert their full force upon the projectile during its passage along the bore of the gun.

The latest developement of the monster is the one-hundred-and-ten-ton gun, which carries a proportionately bigger bolt, with a greater charge of powder. These guns cannot be produced in large quantities, it is evident, or at short notice. The biggest of them take a period of two years to complete. Enormous as their strength may be, it is tried to the utmost by the immense charges of powder, and the resistance of the huge projectile. After firing one hundred and twenty rounds or so, the lining of the gun is so far injured that it requires renewal. And the slightest fault in material or workmanship, or mistake in the manipulation of the gun, may lead to direful consequences. The twelve-inch guns of the "Collingwood" and "Active" blew their chases away; a mishap on the "Thunderer" involved the wrecking of the gun, and the loss of valuable lives. There is no absolute safety to be had in dealing with earthquakes and volcanoes; neither is there in handling these terrible monsters.

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As to the effect of the fire of monster guns in actual warfare, it can only be guessed at. The old sea-fights were terrible enough, with the roar of guns, the rattle of musketry, the clashing and splintering of timbers, the groans of the wounded and dying. But a fight between ironclads, armed with their monster guns, would be something almost too terrible for the imagination to grasp. Surely nothing that can be constructed with steel or iron could withstand the impact of that huge bolt—a ton or more in weight flying at the rate of twenty miles a minute, and striking fairly on a vessel's side. The first successful shot would decide the contest, and the great iron ship, with all its complicated mechanism, paralysed by the shock, would float a helpless wreck upon the waves.

It is quite possible, indeed, and much to be hoped, that this battle of monster guns may never be fought. The art of torpedo warfare may some day become so highly developed that ironclads will be pronounced so many useless death-traps, and the armoured ship may become extinct in its turn, like the armour-clad warrior. But we are a long way from such a result at present. We must still go on making monster guns, and we must not rest satisfied till not only our navy is supplied with the best and the biggest, but also every vulnerable point about our dockyards and great commercial ports.

In the struggle for supremacy in big guns, England has its advantages in the skill and enterprise of those who conduct its great steel works. Sheffield casts the ingots of steel from which are forged the monster guns, and supplies alike the Royal Gun Factory, and the private makers of ordnance. But Krupp of Essen is a formidable rival. Krupp can cast an ingot of from fifty to sixty tons in weight, and the monster guns furnished by him to foreign Powers are in no way inferior to those of our great makers. France, too, has her Schneider at Le Creusot, where a steel ingot of one hundred tons has been cast successfully, and where monster guns of a very formidable character are turned out.

England and America are perhaps the most fertile in new inventions. And among the latest of these is the wire gun of Mr. J. A. Longridge; the gun being built up of successive coils of a thin steel ribbon, the whole forming a homogeneous mass, in which the outer, as well as the inner portions, bear their appropriate share in the strain upon the gun from the explosive gases liberated when the charge is fired. In this way we should have a most welcome decrease in the weight of our guns with the same ballistic power. The ribbon or wire gun seems to withstand the lateral pressure admirably; the chief doubt is as to whether it will stand the longitudinal strain which is so trying for guns built up of coils.

Another, and American, invention deals with the explosive power of dynamite, and undertakes to hurl a shell, containing five hundred pounds of that terrible explosive, to a distance of a couple of miles, when it explodes on striking, and deals destruction on everything within a given radius of the explosion. The use of dynamite shells has often been suggested, but, happily, they are impracticable for ordinary guns, as the shock of the discharge would explode the dynamite, and the engineer would probably be hoist with his own petard. But our inventor has devised a pneumatic tube —a big air-gun, in fact—from which the shell is expelled, like a pea from a peashooter, without any dangerous initial shock. The American Government has, it appears, already fitted up a vessel with the necessary machinery and the pneumatic tube which is to put the new invention to the test.

But one would think that, before long, a general understanding would be arrived at, among civilised nations, to limit in some way the resort to such means of wholesale destruction.

CURIOSITIES OF COMPOSITION.

It is the pride and glory of our Public Schools that they teach no English. French, German, mathematics, if you please; Grecian history, Grecian literature, Greek language and composition; Latin language, literature, history, composition —yes; but English—no, never. England has no literature or history worth reading, no classics worth studying—none, at least, in comparison with other countries; and an ounce of the foreign is worth a ton of the homespun.

To be sure, Macaulay has left it as his opinion that no man can ever hope to do anything great except in his own language, the language of his childhood and youth: "No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when, and

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which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure." But Macaulay did not know much about these things. At all events, we have advanced greatly since his time, and therefore dead and foreign languages are taught in England; but not English.

The Civil Service Commissioners, and others in charge of public examinations, have recognised and responded to this tendency, by cutting down the marks obtainable in English, until now the obnoxious subject is practically boycotted at all competitive tests.

"Abeunt studia in mores," and that negatively as well as positively; and the ideas entertained on English matters, literary and historical, and the excursions made in English composition by the scholars of our public schools are worthy of all admiration. The writer has had, for the last six years, to deal with young gentlemen straight from Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, Westminster, Cheltenham, Marlborough, Charter House—in fact, from nearly all our public schools—and it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the performances of these young gentlemen in Geography, English History, and Composition, have been, as a rule, unparalleled — unapproachable by any other civilised nation, and are, in fact, "facile princeps" in the department of the unique.

It is a fact that some of these gentlemen placed Mount Everest, Leghorn, and Lake Chad in Scotland; Timbuctoo and Elsinore in the United States; Buenos Ayres in Burmah; Bagdad in Africa; Salt Lake City in Palestine; Lausanne in Spain; Fiume and Jena in China; and Benares in Ireland. By others we have been told that Waterloo was one of Marlborough's victories, and that Oudenarde was one of Wellington's; that Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, was King of France in 1828; that Glencoe was a Scotchman, that the Crystal Palace was founded by Cardinal Wolsey, that Shakespeare wrote two hundred plays, and that one of his best was "The Canterbury Tales;" that Sir Philip Sidney defended Acre in 1799, that Thomas Moore was beheaded by Henry the Eighth, that Luther was a Pope, and that Matthew Arnold was a man who was concerned in the Aylesbury election lawsuit in Queen Anne's reign. "Is Addison alive now?" asked one of these scholars once. "Dean Swift," said another, "I don't understand; who was he? Was his Christian name Dean, or how?"

Our main purpose at present, however, is to set forth some gems of authorship, curiosities of composition, from the pens of these budding Burkes and juvenile Macaulays, as displayed in Essays, or in papers written in answer to English History questions. It might be imagined that some of these are jokes or forgeries. They are not. They are warranted to be genuine "ipsissima verba" of the pupils themselves, copied down from the original, along with the name, date, and occasion—the latter "not for publication." But, surely no warrant is necessary, for these grammatical forms and idioms cannot be coined at will, and are incapable of imitation. As with the broken English of a foreigner, it is easy to detect that which is genuine and spontaneous from that which is manufactured for a purpose. There is a ring of artless error and unadulterated blundering about the true metal which no specious counterfeit can produce. But let the extracts speak for themselves. The following are taken from Essays: *

"James Watt was at first a wretched man; but he made great discoveries in steam, and at last pulled himself up to the top of the tree of life."

"Music soothes the savage breast, some men say, and so it did in the case of David and Solomon."

"About this time a Turk came to London, and set up a coffee shop at which beverage he had received a reputation from his Mahometan friends at making it."

"An overloaded donkey or horse which is doing its best to do its utmost."

"In conclusion a linguist, in these days of electricity and steam, can always bring his languages into use, wether at examinations or in Society."

The following contain some valuable information:

"The Armada was to take the Duke of Panama and his troops from the coast of France and to land them in England."

"Elizabeth's reign lasted from fifteen fifty-three to seventeen hundred and two."

"The horse, whose origin was found to be in Arabia and Australia, is our chief domestic animal."

"Also we may call the dog a domestic

* The punctuation and spelling of the original are preserved.

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animal although in this country we get no use out of him."

"Of course if we do as to our capabilities beatings will not make us do more."

"The person who says this ["de mortuis nil," etc.] would not think of saying it if he were alive. . . . It is also very bad form and shows the worst form of ill-nature, because for one great and important reason is that the dead person leaves friends and relatives behind them. . . . As a saying says—'One should do unto all men as they would they do unto us.'"

Talk about Irish bulls, what Hibernianisms can surpass some of the following?

"The Temperance Society have more or less started coffee-houses and reading rooms, etc., to amuse the working people. . . . No man ought to be made to join these societies unless he offers first."

"If you go to the theatre constantly you get to like it so much that you become dissatisfied if you do not go there often."

"If it were not for some kind of public press people would be ignorant of many subjects, and the most of knowledge would only be confined to those who know it. . . . But whether it would be wise to abolish the free press is not true."

"Then in autumn in the country all out-door pleasures still continue till the very last which are difficult to obtain in a town unless one walks some miles out of it."

"Pets are sometimes made of horses."

The following excerpts are difficult to be classified, but they are choice:

"Of course of the two classes the domestic animals are the most profitable for one reason and the chief one, because they are used for food, and another for their skin."

"It has sometimes been heard of that from a mere jest on a young person, it has led to all kinds of effects, and frighten them for life. . . . It has often been heard of a person being frightened to ask another for anything are even frightened to speak."

The following essay on the "Credibility of Ghosts and Apparitions" is too perfect and harmonious to distort by quotation; it must be given entire.

"Once it was quite a common thing to believe in ghosts and apparitions, but lately it has been greatly dropped. It is not a matter of discussion whether there is an existence of ghosts because it is mere imagination. Perhaps there are a few persons who still believe in them, but no sensible person can. Perhaps the cause of belief in apparitions may be from imagination. A person sees a shadow, which may look uncommonly like a figure of some being, he immediately goes away with the idea that it is a ghost. Another reason, we can imagine is, after having read about dreadful stories, haunted houses, and many other things, one is apt to imagine them to be true, and quite forget the true idea. From a mere practical joke, by putting a sheet, or anything white, on a pole and after the shape of an imaginary ghost at night may lead many to believe it is a ghost. There is a story told of Luther while working in his study he perceived something of a light shade on the wall, he immediately took up the ink pot and threw it at the apparition. This took place in the castle of Warburg where the mark can still be seen in the wall. Such stories are of constant occurrence. The belief in the existence of ghosts is something like believing in superstitions, although many a sensible person firmly belief in superstitions but not in ghosts. Many of these superstitions are of ancient origin and therefore there is perhaps more reason for them being truer. As we have said before the belief in the existence of ghosts is mere imagination for it could be nothing else. If we only wished we could imagine anything almost we could like. We see how imagination leads some people astray; from constant imagination they forget reality, and the original is quite lost sight of. Often the cause of the credibility of the existence of ghosts may be from being frightened when young over which they have not recovered. It is a senseless thing to do, it not only leads the person to be frightened afterwards but also it may have its present effects."

The following items are from papers on English History, and should be weighed, considered, chewed, and digested:

"Alfred the Great was the first to introduce time, which he did by means of candles."

"Roger Bacon by means of his custom of writing books became very poor."

"The Pope wished him (Roger Bacon) to write, but paper and pencils were so dear that he could not do so till some time after when he wrote a book called 'Opus Majus.'"

"Van Tromp swept the Channel with a brougham at his mast head."

"Newton invented the fluxions of light."

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"Marlborough is first heard of at the battle of Turenne."*

"Cranmer was a weak-minded man and went to the steak recanting."

"Eliot was one of the best eloquists in England."

"The clergy clung to the King because they were afraid of the Lollards, and the King turned merchant and made vast sums of money."

"William I. was very strong and had a savage countenance and never allowed himself to be tampered with."

"The Friars were instituted by religious fanatics who did not like monks who only drank wine and eat."

"Lottery loans were loans borrowed and repaid at very low interest. But some of the money which was borrowed Government in repaying it—the people who put it were chosen by lot and had it paid back at a very high interest."

"The friars were divided into sections—white, black, and grey. They went round the country preaching and curing diseases. They also spoke on sanity† and cleanliness."

"Newton invented the laws of gravitation and the motions of the planets."

We pause—not for want of material, but for want of space. The above extracts would have interested Macaulay—Macaulay, whose proverbial "schoolboy" had all knowledge and understanding, and was equally conversant with ancient and modern languages, English, European, and general history and literature, geography, and mathematics.

When the young gentlemen who are responsible for the above sentences—and whose ages range from sixteen to twenty-three—enter their respective professions, and put their legs under the aristocratic mahogany of Belgravia, it would be interesting to know what part they will take in the after-dinner conversations. An officer from Bombay perhaps is present, and the conversation turns on Assaye and its battle; or a barrister is there who is an ardent angler, and Walton is spoken of; or a friend of the host's has entered the diplomatic service, and is about to start for South America, and the discourse turns on Buenos Ayres; or "Charles the First" is about to be performed at the Lyceum, and that subject becomes matter of discussion. How the young Harrovian, Rugbeian, or Etonian will fall a-thinking! How he will wonder whether Assaye was won by Clive or Warren Hastings; whether Walton was a barrister, or a professional fisherman who kept a punt on the Thames; whether "Charles the First" was written by Shakespeare or by one of his predecessors; whether Buenos Ayres is two towns or one, and whether it is anywhere near Buda-Pesth! Verily these things—if he be a thinking man—will be to him a sore puzzle and a torment. Happy for him if he be blest with sisters, for they will be able to set him right.

* It is conjectured that this refers to hi having "served under" Turenne.

† Query—"Sanitary matters."

THE STORY OF ALICE LYNTON.

A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

"No, Keziah, it is not the least use talking about it. She must come here. There's no help for it."

"Then, what's the good o' grumblin' at it?" demanded Keziah, with a barely repressed air of fury and indignation.

"No good," I admitted with a sigh, as I glanced round my dainty little drawing-room, and thought how recklessly the expected visitor would probably treat all my pet bits of furniture, my rare china, my numerous nicknacks that it had taken me nearly forty years to collect.

"Then I wudn't do it,' declared my elderly handmaiden, with a terrible snort, that filled me with fear, and added to my perplexities, for I stood rather in awe of my grim-looking servant; and, as she had lived with me for twenty years and more, and knew my ways thoroughly, I was afraid of losing her, and having to supply her place with a youthful piece of impertinence, in pink cotton and lilac ribbons, who would turn the house topsy-turvy, and send me into a fever with her flighty ways.

"No," she went on, fixing me with her sharp little black eyes, "if Master Jack's wife's got to come here, and there ain't no cure fur it, why, let her come, and don't you bother yerself about it. 'What can't be cured must be endured,' ye know."

"Yes, that is all very well," I began; but I was talking to the chairs, and the tables, and the nicknacks. Keziah had vanished; I was left alone in my glory, and with my perplexities.

I tried to amuse myself by settling some of the spring blooms floating about in the big family punch-bowl, in vases, and jars;

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but I did not take the same interest as usual in my occupation, and I found myself sighing irritably, every now and then.

The fact was, my nephew — my only nephew, and the apple of my eye—had written, some weeks before, to ask me to receive his wife, whose health he said had suffered from the rigours of the Canadian winters, into my house, until his regiment, which was expecting orders daily, should arrive in England, and he be able to give her a home of her own.

Of course I wrote back at once, and said "Yes." I had never refused Jack anything in his life, and I was not going to begin now, when he was in such a fidget about his dear Alice's health. Nevertheless, I was not very well pleased at the prospect of receiving a fashionable young woman into my house, who would probably laugh at my ways, and ridicule my old-maidish habits. For an old maid I was, of fifty. I am not going to deny it. Indeed, why should I?

Still, though no one ever asked me to change my state of single blessedness for one of double misery, and though I therefore had no chick or child of my own, I had brought up my only sister's boy, Jack Lynton, and loved him just as well as though he was my own, which is saying a good deal; yet I know no one could have been more to me than dear Jack. When he grew up, I gave him his choice of a profession, and he chose the army. He had plenty of money, so I made no objections; and it was all very well while the regiment remained in England, but when it was ordered to Canada I thought my heart must break. However, it did not. Hearts are made of stern stuff nowadays, and it takes a marvellous lot to damage them. I continued to live and thrive, and even sustained the shock of the announcement of his approaching marriage, six months later, with a certain amount of equanimity. Of course he asked my consent to it, and equally of course I gave it, for where would have been the use of withholding it? He was of age, and his own master in every way, and he could do as he liked; and he did. He married this French-Canadian, and declared himself the happiest man in the world.

I was mildly jealous, and almost hated the mere thought of her. I had had the monopoly of darning his socks and putting buttons on his shirts all his life, and I ardently desired to retain it. No giddy girl could or would knit him such blue and red silk socks as I manufactured for him, or turn out such faultless shirts, for I never let him don one unless manufactured by my hands, and I sent a parcel out to him regularly twice a year, which he duly acknowledged with grateful thanks.

He sent me half-a-dozen different photos of his wife. He was evidently proud of her, and she was pretty, undeniably and uncommonly pretty. Only gazing at her fair pictured face with eyes sharpened by love, I thought it a trifle insincere-looking, and that the heavy-lidded, languid eyes could hide more than they revealed.

Still, she was a lady, though absolutely penniless, this Alice du Pryé; and I thanked Heaven that he had not made one of those terrible mésalliances that young men perpetrate with such utter disregard for the feelings and wishes of their friends; and I considered myself bound to receive her in my house, give her a home, and play the part of mother to her, until her husband arrived to look after her, and take the rather unwelcome responsibilities off my shoulders. I did not feel altogether happy or comfortable as I sat there arranging my daffodils and violets, and trying to make the sprays of hyacinth look as little pokerish as possible.

She was evidently, from the style of her dress, one of those women who keep in the front rank of the fashions, and always have the last new thing, whereas I consider it better and more economical for a woman to get a thorough good dress, once in three years, and make it do, with the help of two or three every-day ones. Moreover, I liked to have forty winks after dinner undisturbed, was fond of a game of cribbage with my neighbour, Lawyer Smiles, three or four times a week, liked a cut out of a plain joint, detested made dishes, and kickshaws, and adored Fido, my little King Charles spaniel, who was, I must admit, rather fat—so fat, indeed, that it was difficult to tell which was his head and which his tail, for he resembled an animated ball of long hair.

Now, the coming of Alice Lynton might upset and disturb all my ways and habits; and, when one is fifty, one objects strongly to being disturbed. The greater part of those fifty years I had spent alone, and certain things occurred at certain hours in my establishment with clockwork-like regularity. I felt it would be a grievous thing if new habits and new ways were introduced.

However, I need not have troubled myself.

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When my niece-in-law appeared she fell into all my ways with lamb-like docility—a docility which astonished me, for she hardly looked one of the meek sort. There was a lurking gleam in the splendid brown eyes, a haughty curl about the faultless mouth, a dilatation about the nostrils that told of fiery temper. She was much more beautiful than her photograph had led me to suppose. Her skin was just the most lovely I have ever seen. It was like the petal of a white flower, clear, and exquisitely delicate, without a tinge of colour, save in the lips — they were brilliant vermilion. Her hair was of a dull gold colour, several shades lighter than her brows; while her lashes were intensely black, and made the gazelle-like eyes look darker and deeper. I did not wonder at Jack's infatuation after seeing her. It was a dangerously alluring face—one a man could hardly look on and not love.

She did not seem to me to be quite happy. I thought at first she was anxious about her health; but after she had been with me for some weeks, I came to the conclusion that she had a secret, and was suffering in consequence. I tried to win her confidence, but failed utterly. That proud, shy, self-tormenting nature could not readily turn to a stranger for help in its sore need. She stood alone, and fought her terrible battle against self and unholy longings alone. Afterwards I knew, and understood, and felt some pity in the midst of all my condemnation. Then it was a mystery to me, an enigma I could not solve. As the days wore on, and it grew near the time for Jack's arrival, she grew more restless, and queer, and from one or two things I gathered, with a strange sense of indignation and pain, that she dreaded his coming.

"Why?"

That was what I asked myself twenty times a day. Why should she dread the coming of the husband she had married apparently for love? True, Jack had eight hundred a year; but then he was such a handsome, debonair fellow, I could not believe any woman would marry him for his money. He was just one of those men women go mad about—who hold a mysterious, irresistible charm for the other sex.

She must love him. Therefore, why fear his coming? I tried not to think about it. I busied myself in preparing his room, and knitting a dozen pairs of new socks for him, leaving his wife pretty well to her own devices. She hadn't many friends. Now and then one or two called. Her most frequent visitors were a Major Denzil and his wife, though they were so much alike they might easily have been taken for brother and sister.

Somehow or other, I did not like this dashing Major. There was something false to me in his cold, brilliant smile, his artificial manner, and coxcombish way, and I took to not appearing when they were present, my absence not seeming to be noticed by the young trio. Occasionally Alice spent the day with the Denzils, and generally came back with an unusual flush on her pale cheeks, and an unwonted animation in her manner; and I knew the Major rowed her about a good deal in his skiff, for my garden stretched to the river-side, and more than once, to my astonishment, I saw him leisurely pulling her to the landing-place. I say astonishment, because on each and every one of these occasions I had fancied she was lying down in her room, resting after some fatigue; and I began to wish Jack would come, for I felt quite unequal to the responsibility I had accepted, and was anxious to resign it. For what could I do? Though I disliked the Denzils, I could not forbid her intercourse with them, and my hints she only smiled at with cool and superb impertinence.

CHAPTER II.

"What is the news?" she asked, languidly, one sultry August morning, as she sat toying with her cup, her eyes, though, fixed on the letter the postman had just brought me, and which she knew was from Jack, for she had glanced eagerly at the writing as Keziah handed it to me. "When does he return?"

"Very soon," I replied, joyfully.

"When?" she reiterated, in monotonous tones.

"He doesn't say which day he will arrive, so that he may not disappoint us; but it will be very soon," I replied, glancing at her; and I was amazed to see that she was fearfully pale, and that in the large eyes was a hunted, agonised expression — one which I had seen there before, only not so plainly.

"What's the matter?" I asked, concernedly. "Don't you feel well?"

"The old pain here," she replied, laying her hand on her heart, while she tried to force her pale lips to smile.

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"You must see Curzon again," I remarked.

"He does me no good."

"Jack will take you to a specialist."

"Jack?" she repeated, in a dazed kind of way, as though not understanding.

"Yes. If he comes to-night, I shall advise him to take you to-morrow or next day."

"If he comes to-night!" she repeated again, as though aghast. "Do you think he will come to-night, Aunt Jane?"

"He may," I replied, staring at her in astonishment, for she was shivering as if ague-stricken. "I shall be glad, Alice, if he does come," I went on, gravely, "for I am anxious about you in more ways than one."

"Anxious about me!" she echoed, raising her large, unutterably sad eyes to mine. "Why?"

"Your state of health worries me. You're not so well as when you came here. You're so feverish, and restless. And then—the Denzils," I concluded, with considerable hesitation.

"What of them?" she asked, all signs of languor vanishing from her tone and manner.

"I don't like them, child."

"Indeed! Why not?"

Her voice was cold, her eyes glittering like stars as she fixed them on me.

"I—I—can—hardly tell," I stammered, feeling much embarrassed under that steady gaze.

"I should think not," she rejoined, icily, a red streak mounting to each pale cheek and burning there furiously.

"Only," I went on, taking courage as I thought of Jack, "they seem to me worldly and—and—fast, and not altogether desirable companions for you."

"They are not more worldly than nine-tenths of the people one meets in society every day," she said, hastily taking up the cudgels in their defence at once.

"Possibly not," I admitted, reluctantly. "Society and I parted company long ago."

"Yes; that is just it. You know nothing of the present state of the fashionable world. Because people are merry and light-hearted now, and seek all the amusement they can get, instead of looking sanctimonious and singing psalms, as in your young days, you say they are bad."

"My dear!" I exclaimed, somewhat shocked, "I did not say that they were bad."

"You insinuated it. You said they were fast, and undesirable companions for me," she retorted, fixing her shining, miserable-looking eyes again on my face.

"I certainly don't approve of Mrs. Denzil," I said, summoning all my courage and speaking very firmly, "as a constant companion for you. She is a mass of affectation, and artificial to the last degree, both inwardly and outwardly. I am certain she is insincere, and her hair and complexion are 'got up' to such an extent that she has all the appearance of a fourth-rate actress."

"And the Major," she asked, in a low, hoarse tone, "what do you think of him?"

"A man I should put no faith or trust in," I replied with decision, having a curious feeling that there was a great deal at stake, and that I ought to speak strongly. "A man of strong passions and unbridled desires. One who would let nothing stand in the way of their gratification, and who would fling aside the object of them, when sated, with as little compunction as most men would an old glove."

"Ah!" she murmured faintly, clasping her hands, with her usual familiar gesture, over her heart.

"His ideas of honour, too, must be very rudimentary," I continued, cuttingly, urged on by some irresistible power to speak in a way totally foreign to my usual tame-tabby-cat style, "to permit of his paying another man's wife such close and pointed attention, as he has paid you during the last few months; and I think, if you really loved Jack, you wouldn't allow another man to speak to you and beau you about, as you do Major Denzil."

"If I really loved Jack," she repeated, in a dazed fashion.

"Yes," nodding my head sagely. "If you did, you wouldn't, you know; and I wonder his wife allows it. She must be a very extraordinary sort of person to look on so calmly while he coolly makes love to you."

"His wife?" she repeated again, as if barely comprehending.

"I said so; and now, Alice, I think you had better go and lie down, and keep quiet. You look dreadfully ill. It won't do to meet Jack with that ghastly face, if he should come this evening."

"Do you think he will come this evening?" she queried, in strange, monotonous voice.

"I can't tell you for certain. He may

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not come for three or four days. But there is one thing I must ask of you, and that is that you will not go to the Denzils or hold any intercourse with them until he comes."

"I am going there to-night after dinner," she rejoined, with a sullen lowering of the heavy white lids.

"I beg you will not do so," I said, quickly.

"I must. I have promised."

"Can you not break your promise?"

"No, I cannot break it," and as she spoke our eyes met, and something in hers, a look of unutterable, hopeless misery, made me shiver, as though a cold blast had blown on me.

"You could if you wished," I told her, sharply.

"No," she said, drearily. "There are some things we cannot do even when we wish to. Fate, or our evil genius, is too strong for us. But I promise you one thing, Aunt Jane," with a wan, ghostly smile, "I will not go to the Rosaries after to-night."

"Then I suppose I must be content with that," I said, reluctantly, as she turned and left the room.

I rang the bell for Keziah to clear the breakfast-things, and then tried to interest myself in my usual daily duties. But there was no denying it, my heart was in a flutter, and I felt uneasy and anxious about Alice.

I did not see her at luncheon. She had it sent up to her room, and she did not appear again until six o'clock, when we had dinner. She looked very pale, and her eyes were heavy and dark-rimmed; and the rich black silk dress she wore added to her sombre appearance and the ghastliness of her face. I thought it a strange gown for her to put on, for the night was intensely hot and sultry, and I knew she had several pretty white ones. However, I wisely refrained from making any remark, and she volunteered no information, so we sat opposite each other in moody silence, trifling with our dinner, and making a pretence of eating, for it was evident neither of us had any appetite.

She rose abruptly when it was over, and left the room without saying a word. I heard her go up the stairs and into her bedroom, which was over the dining-room, and then I, too, got up, and walking across the hall to the drawing-room, sat down by the open window, and began to knit diligently, looking out every now and then to watch the shadows lengthen, and the stars begin to twinkle in the blue vault of heaven.

I had left the door wide open, for the heat was so great, and as the Louis Quatorze clock on the mantelshelf struck eight, I saw a black-robed figure come swiftly down the stairs, and knew it was Alice. She paused for a moment by the door, and turned her head. Her face was startlingly, horribly pale, and its pallor was intensified by the black lace mantilla thrown over her hair, and twisted round her throat.

"So you are going?" I said, quietly. "When will you be back? Remember, Jack may come to-night. You ought to be here to meet him."

She made a slight dissentient movement with her head, and then turning, walked swiftly through the hall with the same noiseless tread as she had descended the stairs with. I watched her glide over the lawn, and disappear in the shadows beyond without a word more of protest.

What was the good? She was wilful and determined. She would do just as she pleased, and I could not stop her. I had said as much as I dared in the morning. Only I began to wish fervently Jack would arrive, and take this responsibility off my unwilling hands.

As though in response to my silent prayers, there was the sound of wheels about nine o'clock, and Jack descended from a fly, and rushed in, and began embracing me ardently.

"Where is Alice?" he asked, eagerly, looking round, after the hugging was over.

"She has gone to the Denzils'. She did not think you would come to-night," I explained

"Oh! the Denzils'. Let me see—who are they?"

"Canadian folk, she told me, from Montreal. Rather a pretty little woman, and a tall, moustached man, the Major."

"Major Denzil? Ah, yes! I remember. Brother and sister. A trifle rapid, but amusing company."

Brother and sister! You might have knocked me down with a feather! Why had they been introduced to me as husband and wife?

"Where are they living?" he went on, not noticing my agitation and astonishment.

"At the Rosaries," I managed to reply, with tolerable steadiness.

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"Then we will walk across and fetch her. It is such a little way."

"Yes," I responded, mechanically, picking up a light shawl and throwing it over my shoulders.

I followed him.

The Rosaries was the next house to mine, and our gardens were only separated by a copse or grove. When we emerged from this, to my intense astonishment, we came face to face with Major Denzil, smoking a huge cigar, and even in my anxiety and distress of mind I noticed he was not, as usual, in evening dress, but wore a grey travelling suit something similar to Jack's.

"This is my nephew, Captain Lynton," I explained, coldly. "We have come to fetch my niece."

"I think we have met before," said the Major, with some slight embarrassment.

"Yes, in Canada," chimed in Jack, in his cheery tones, quite ready to shake hands; but Denzil did not offer his.

"Yes," he agreed. Then turning to me, he said: "Mrs. Lynton has not been here to-night, Miss Torrens, though we did expect to have the pleasure of seeing her."

"Not here!" I gasped, aghast. "Then where did she go an hour back, when I saw her pass the drawing-room door and come in this direction?"

"That I cannot tell you," he replied, quietly, meeting my eyes unhesitatingly; "but we have seen nothing of her to-night."

"Jack," I muttered, in a trembling whisper, as I clutched his arm, "she has been ill and out of sorts all day. I wanted her to promise not to go out. Where can she be?" and instinctively my horrified eyes glanced towards the river.

Jack turned pale, and suggested a search through the copse and garden, in which Denzil joined. But though every place was searched, no trace of her was found.

"Try the house," suggested the Major, in husky tones.

Accordingly, we went up the pathway, into the hall, and Jack called "Alice, Alice," loudly. Still there was no answer. With quaking heart and shaking limbs, I led the way up to her room. The door stood wide open; the window was thrown up, and through it streamed the bright moon-rays, making it nearly light as day, and showing a dark-clad figure sitting at the writing-table, its head resting on its outstretched arms.

"Alice, Alice, my dearest," cried Jack, springing to her side and taking her in his arms. "How you have startled us!"

The next moment he gave a loud cry.

"She is dead!"

There was another cry, choked and strangled at its birth, yet terrible all the same, and I knew it was the Major who gave utterance to it, as he stood in the doorway as immoveable as if carved in stone, never making the slightest attempt to go nearer and look at the ghastly burden in Jack's arms.

From his stony, agonised face, my eyes travelled to the writing-table, and on it I saw a letter. In a moment it flashed across me that she had been writing to Jack, a confession of something which would be discreditable to her memory, and now could do him no good; and, quick as a thought, I transferred it to my pocket. Then, in all haste, I got Keziah to summon the doctor, and did what I could to restore animation to Alice's frame, and console Jack.

In both these attempts I was unsuccessful, and when the doctor came, after a slight examination, he declared she was dead, and had been quite two hours—Heart disease. If, therefore, Alice died a little before eight, who, or what, was the figure I saw glide down the stairs and stand at the drawing-room door, as the clock struck that hour?

Poor Jack was quite broken-hearted and inconsolable, and long before his leave was up rejoined his regiment, it having volunteered for service against the Zulus, declaring that the only thing to save him from madness was hard fighting.

After he left, I summoned courage, one day, to read the last lines Alice Lynton's hand had ever penned. It was a letter to her husband, begging his forgiveness for her sin against him. A mad, wild, broken-hearted letter; and from it I gathered that she had met, and loved, Denzil some years before; but both being poor, marriage between them was forbidden by her father. Then my poor Jack met and fell in love with her beautiful face, and she, obeying her arbitrary parent, married him for the sake of his eight hundred a year.

Then came the voyage to England. An unfortunate one, for on board the "City of Trent" she met Denzil and his sister, who had come in for a little money, and were going to England to take possession of it. The old affection—crushed and forced back—woke again with redoubled

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force, and at last, after desperate struggles and vain repinings, Alice Lynton consented to forget her duty, to give up all woman holds dear, and fly with Gerald Denzil, on the night her adoring, trusting husband was expected to arrive.

Death mercifully stepped in and saved her from the stigma of dishonour, and ineffaceable disgrace and misery.

Ah! poor humanity. So frail! So fair! Of the two men who loved her, I think the Major was most to be pitied; for Jack still believed her to have been a pure, stainless creature, worthy of his regret and affection; while Denzil knew that she was weak and false, untrue to her marriage vows, and her honour, and that, moreover, she died with horrible suddenness, when on the eve of committing a great sin.

I never think of that close, sultry August evening without a chill shudder running through me from head to foot, and an air as if from the Catacombs surrounding me.

THE WAYS OF EXPERIENCE.

It may seem something of a bull to say that experience is probably the best training a man may have. And yet I do not think it is. For there are many men to whom the solution of riddles, of which the word "experience" is the epitome, does not bring joy, and who were happier far, dull and unenlightened, in a cottage by a hill, than in the heart of a metropolis, all the manifold pulse-beats of which are fully known to them.

Not every one, then, should go to school to gain experience.

For the majority, however, who live by action rather than thought, there is no college to compare with it. It gives strength and courage, and that self-knowledge which is better even than either strength or courage. There is no more accomplished person than an accomplished man of the world, to whom experience is as a tonic, and who, nevertheless, keeps his heart warm within him. The words of Browning's Bishop Blougram are his words, and have better justification in him than they had in the Bishop:

> I know the special kind of life I like,
> What suits the most my idiosyncrasy,
> Brings out the best of me, and bears me fruit
> In power, peace, pleasantness, and length of days.

Indeed, experience may be said to be the leaven without which no man can attain, intellectually and spiritually, his full stature. Perhaps the converse proposition may be stated: that it depends upon experience also whether a man shall sink to the full measure of the degradation of which he is capable. This, however, involves a knotty question: nothing less than the solution of the problem about character, whether or no it is a fixed quantity in each individual, not to be enlarged or diminished, susceptible only of developement. Schopenhauer held that it was a fixed quantity; so also did Carlyle, one of whose favourite theories "was that no man was mendable; so that if a man is a scoundrel the only way is to put him into a hole in a bog, with a hurdle over him, in the old German fashion."

Such a course of action might, perhaps, tend towards the amelioration of society; but I am afraid we should find that there were more scoundrels, of Carlyle's kind, than bogs to hold them. It was the notion of a man bred up in an atmosphere of Calvinism; and, indeed, the idea that all characters are not alike capable of ennoblement is consoling to philosophers rather than encouraging to the rest of us.

Some think that "experience" is all but synonymous with a round of dissipation, reckless expenditure, and riotous living. It is a childish and absurd fancy, and chiefly in the thoughts of unfledged youths. Could there be, in fact, a more fatuous misconception of life than the belief that he alone knows life, or is experienced, who has plunged himself, to the eyebrows, in the vortex of debauchery of the world's greatest cities?

To me it is as if a man boasted of his knowledge of Nature after a narrow escape from death by suffocation in the thick mire of a moorland's ditch. It is a parallel case with that of those Hungarian peasants of whom the traveller Paget tells us that they "cannot see the use of drinking what will not make them drunk." Ask a man, who has acquired experience in such a mode, what his experience is worth; and, if he have any honesty left in him—a doubtful case—he will surely reply, "Less than nothing."

It were bold in a man to decide the worth and nature of experience, in general, to women. Doubtless the omniscient lady is well steeled against the hazards of life. But she cannot be in the same plane as the man in the like case—at least, until we are all resolved that the ideal woman shall have the same recommendatory

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faculties as the ideal man. Nor does she receive the esteem and even admiration from her own sex—less experienced than she—that the man often gets from his fellow-men. To tell the truth, it seems, indeed, that experience in worldly matters is an improper accomplishment for a woman in the eyes of the majority of other women. It may be viewed differently, by-and-by, when we have progressed a little more.

What, then, is the best highway for experience that a woman may follow without rendering herself obnoxious to her fellow-creatures? Really, it is a hard question to answer: and especially for a man who likes simplicity of all things best in the other sex. It is very certain that I and many of my fellow-men are vastly repelled by the cold, calculating eye of an erudite woman—whether her erudition be of books or of the world. Contrast her with the youngest daughter of the Rector of Out-of-the-Way, who, poor girl, denied a governess because her father's stipend is small compared to the number and needs of his offspring, finds daily occupation in the dairy, and among the sick and poor of the parish; and I fear—though the Rector's daughter's beauty may be of no very classical order—she will carry the palm for attractiveness.

A man in the flush of his faculties loves experience as a bird loves to wing through the air. But even a good woman, who has seen much of life and its secret strings, and has kept unsullied through all her experiences, is at the end less disposed to congratulate and plume herself, than to shake her head and sigh. To a man, disillusionment, though something undesirable, is better far than a lifetime of ignorance. But a woman grieves over shattered ideals, bursted hopes, and the grossness, viewed closely, of what at a distance she had conceived to be divine in purity and charm.

In fact, for the present, at any rate, as in past times, there is nothing for it but to repeat that woman's happiest experience is won through the affections and not with the understanding. With her

Love will still be lord of all.

Hence the shy little daughter of the Rector, who carries her fair, blushing face from pauper to pauper, and wins love wherever she goes, has better experience than the woman to whom three continents are familiar, and whose "savoir faire" is never at fault. Man's strongest experience is gained by the head; woman's sweetest experience by her heart. And strength is to a man what sweetness or beauty is to woman.

If we regard experience in its ordinary signification as a series of tryings or attempts, I suppose it is a word which our American cousins may claim to know more about than we ourselves. Failure means less to the average American, much less, than it means to one of us. It is his ladder, indeed, by which he mounts afresh, though in other direction. His experience may not be of a very extensive kind. He may know hardly anything about courts and the classics, about pictures and archæology; but he has gained what is better far—some very useful and even profound self-knowledge. And it is certainly as material for him that he should know that he is quite unable to make a fortune as a candy-seller, though events have proved that as a lawyer he might do well, as it is that he should be able to distinguish a Carlo Dolci from a Guercino.

It is, in fact, their experience that gives the Americans their chief individuality as a people of the world's nations. They stand towards us Europeans like an octopus towards a common fish. "We can do eight things," they might say to us, "where you can do but one—and that one with difficulty!" They have, therefore, eight chances of success where we have but one.

This success, indeed, though not the infallible mark of a man of experience, is one of the rewards of experience. To some of us, there is nothing more indicative of greatness than success. Greatness, therefore, is, in so far, but another name for profound experience.

"One of the greatest of a great man's qualities," says Esmond, in Thackeray's novel, "is success. 'Tis the result of all the others; 'tis a latent power in him, which compels the favour of the gods, and subjugates fortune."

But, on the other hand, we must not forget those—and they are not a few—to whom experience is like dust in the eyes. It does but increase their difficulty of going, instead of making life more plain. They are perplexed by the extension of their knowledge, rather than aided by the loss of their ignorance. They are like men in a desert, who fancy that the farther they go in search of a road they have lost, the wider becomes the horizon of their despair.

Of such men, Leopardi, perhaps too

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bitterly for them, and with over-little regard for more successful men of the world, indites the dolorous epitaph. They are the "people who seem doomed to succeed with their fellows in no single thing—and this neither from their inexperience, nor their ignorance of social life; but from a fixed law of their being. They are unable to lay aside a certain simplicity of manners, and to resume those artificial and mendacious tricks of conduct which all other men, and even fools, use unconsciously, and which become, as it were, a part of their nature, etc."

Here, of course, Leopardi treats of the geniuses of the race. One is disposed to think that he exaggerates the evil of their plight. Though their experience does not help them much in their intercourse with other men, it opens their eyes to their own value. And let the philosophers of melancholy say what they please, the genius does not fail to enjoy, very rapturously at times, the realisation of his own intellectual kingship among men. If this is not compensation for his inability to talk of the weather as glibly as his greengrocer, or to smile upon the stranger with the methodical sweetness of an evangelist, commonplaces have a higher worth than they are supposed to have, and genius is really the undesirable excellence that the pessimists say it is.

As for the discomforts which such a man may feel from friction with his lowlier brethren, for these he has, it must be confessed, generally to thank himself. He should have disciplined his delicacy of spirit even as he has regulated his intellectual exercises. A sensitive person must, in short, habituate himself to explaining away the slights—or what he conceives to be slights—that he is sure to encounter abroad in the world. And really, the intellect is so pliable and sophistical that he will, with practice, find this no such hard task. Thus, eventually, it will come to pass that the severest insults—vexatious enough to the hardened—will glance off his seasoned skin without causing him even the ghost of a pang.

Obviously, however, if our friend trusts to the chapter of accidents in this particular, instead of to systematic training, he must take the consequences, like people of ordinary clay. It is, after all, something to be the possessor, like Lord Chatham, of a certain "superiority of mind," even though, as with him, by preventing "the usual habits of intercourse with the world," it gives "an air of austerity to his manners," and precludes "the policy of a convenient condescension to the minutiæ of politeness and fascinating powers of address." This is what one of his biographers, somewhat heavily, says of the Earl of Chatham, a man who, spite of the gout and his "superiority," did good work for his country, and found life worth living.

Further, it is, methinks, an error, though a natural one, to assume that those who retreat before experience, like a thrashed boy from the cane, are in so compassionable a state as they would sometimes have us believe. What if their eyes are opened to divers discomforting problems that they saw nothing of before? It may suit their convenience to cry over the vexation they suffer in being unable to crack these several nuts. But all the while—perchance so deeply in them that no shadow of it shows in their clouded faces—there is a sparkle of ironical joy in their hearts over what they term the sorry mysteries of life. It may be rather grim revelling; but it suits their temperament, and braces their system quite as effectually as the bellow of laughter with which an old fox-hunting squire acknowledges a comrade's good story.

There's not a doubt that false scent lies thick about the world's surface. Many a man, for lack of courage, enterprise, or strength, goes all his life after it. The Yankee, on the other hand, is not content to do this. He no sooner finds that he is caught by it, than he stops and makes another cast. He gains experience. The other, who plods on like a sheep, may, with groans, gain a living; but nothing more. And it is the same in other matters. The man who realises, or thinks he realises, that he has hitherto believed in this or that, with quite culpable blindness, no sooner turns his back on the venerable fiction—whatever it be—than he perceives new possibilities before him. He may have fallen much in the rear of those who are after the fox; but what's to hinder him riding whither he lists? And so he snuffs the air with a fresh and inspiriting sense of freedom. The others may go tailing after each other if they please. He, for his part, will follow his humour.

When all's said, the discreet Bishop Blougram may furnish us with the key, as well as the lock to the gate of experience:

> The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,
> Is—not to fancy what were fair in life,
> Provided it could be, but, finding first
> What may be, then find how to make it fair
> Up to our means.

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THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

THOUGH April had come, the weather had not mended much. It had been a long, wet winter, and the spring bid fair to be the same. It had been raining nearly all day, and the wind was rising. Daisy, about six o'clock, stood at the dining-room window, looking out into the grey, wet evening. She was so absorbed in her thoughts, that she did not hear Aston come in from the garden.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked, as he came softly up to her. She started, afraid as she always was now, when she found herself alone with him.

"I hardly know," trying to laugh, "except that there is too much rain for April—and that there is too much trouble in some lives."

He knew then of what she had been thinking.

"Poor fellow," he said, kindly, though his heart was full of rage. "I wonder if I could help him in any way. I'm afraid you thought me very hard on him this morning; but—well, you know, I never quite approved of his letting that cousin of his do as he liked with his property. But if I can be of any service to him now, I shall be glad."

His kindness disarmed her.

"Oh! if you would," she exclaimed, her lips quivering. "I can't do anything. I'm certain he won't touch any of my money, though we are just like brother and sister. If you could help him—— There is nothing I would not do to show you my gratitude!"

A sudden, desperate thought seized him. He caught her hands.

"Do you mean that, Daisy?" She tried to draw her hands away; but he only held them tighter. "If you promise to give me what I ask for, I swear that he shan't be a beggar, or, what he dreads most — dishonoured. Men will say it is his fault. They won't make allowances as you do. He knew that his cousin was speculating, and did not interfere. Men will call his conduct by an ugly name, for he had been growing richer by it. But I will pull him through. I can. I will do it, if you ask me. Only promise to be my wife."

"Mr. Aston! Let me go! I can't——"

"You must, darling! I love you so! Do you remember the promise you gave me on the night of the ball? You can fulfil it now. It is the only way you can help my life. Be good to me and Anthony Melvin at the same time. No! I won't make conditions. I'll help him, anyway. But don't be cruel to me. I want you so badly. I love you so dearly!"

His words fell about her like a shower of fiery hail, confusing, stunning her. A thought of Anthony, and how she might help him, mixed itself up with a consciousness of Aston's great kindness to herself. He needed her. He was not happy. She did like him, though at times she was afraid of him. Bewildered, scarcely yet understanding, full of pity for him, troubled for Anthony, she looked up at him appealingly.

Did he misunderstand her expression, or did he wilfully take advantage of her confusion? Before she could speak, his arms were about her, his lips had touched hers. With an inarticulate cry, she tried to free herself.

But he had conquered. He held her too fast. A sense of his overmastering will, a vague thought that she was helping both him and Anthony, a helpless consciousness of that kiss which was still dyeing her face and throat with its scarlet stain, overwhelmed her, and she struggled against him no more.

Miss Ross's amazement was extreme. Aston announced his engagement to her before dinner. She had her own doubts on the wisdom of the matter; but, like a wise woman, held her peace. She congratulated them both with charming impartiality, genuinely interested and excited in the event, and quite longed to see the effect of the news on Riverbridge next day.

It was still raining when Wilton, the same evening, arrived at Aston's office. He was punctual. The clock was striking eight as he reached the mills. He saw no one about, but a light was burning in the office-window, and he found the door unlocked.

The room was empty. Aston had not yet arrived. It was lighted by a reading-lamp that stood on the desk. Near the desk was a small table and a comfortable chair. The green shade of the lamp threw down its light full on the desk and table. It seemed as if Aston had been in and only just left. A half-written note

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lay on the desk. The room was full of the scent of a cigar, the ashes and end of which were in a tray on the table. The room looked comfortable enough. Wilton was wet to the skin. He was faint for want of food. He had had his own reasons for not being seen in Riverbridge, where he was only too well known at all the inns in the town. So he had determined to wait for food till he returned to town.

He had been wandering about in the rain, getting shelter where he could, and was feeling exhausted, weak as he still was from his illness. It would be a comfort to have rest and shelter for a few moments. Yet when he entered the office, and closed the door behind him, he started violently, and made a half-turn to go out again. Besides the odour of the cigar, the atmosphere of the room was heavy with another. A glass lay broken on the floor by the table; its contents were spilled, filling the room with their fumes. It was brandy. Wilton glanced at the table. Just over it hung a small cupboard; the door was half open, and inside was a brandy bottle. As Wilton caught sight of it, he shuddered violently, and, turning, opened the door. The rain was coming down in torrents. Chilled, faint for want of food, exhausted with fatigue, Wilton hesitated.

"I'm stronger," he muttered. "And it's not fit for a dog out there. He can't be long now."

He sat down again, just within the door, leaving it open, that the fresh air might come in and take the place of those deadly fumes. But the wind and the rain drove into the room, and after some minutes Wilton rose and shut the door, with an impatient curse on Aston for delaying so long.

Ugh! How cold he was! And then the next moment he seemed consumed with a raging fire, which scorched the blood in his veins, and parched up his throat and lips. That rain! How it fell! And the gurgling noises of the river. It made a man feel thirsty. A drink of water would set him right. Perhaps there was some in the room. There, in the cupboard — was not that a decanter? He made a few steps towards it, then stopped, shuddering violently.

"It's not water I want! I'm a miserable cur!. I'm a dolt!" He set his teeth hard, and something like the fierce glare of a wild beast's eyes leaped into his. "It's all his fault. What is he stopping for? I won't drink; I swore to Melvin. Half-past eight, and he's not here yet. I can't hold out much longer. I'm trembling for food, and chilled to the bone." He drew in a deep breath. The air was heavy with brandy. "Rare good stuff! None of that fiery, villainous concoction that sends a man mad—real old cognac, that goes into a man's veins, and gives strength to his feeble limbs. Just a mouthful would make me warm. Why, in the weak, hungry condition I am in, he might argue me into doing anything; and then where would Melvin be? But I promised—— Only a mouthful—— What on earth makes him so long coming?—— I'm strong, too, now. I can take a drink, and stop—— What a hundred shames to waste such rare stuff—a whole tumblerful—— Aston will be here in a moment——"

Nearer, nearer. With glistening, glaring eyes; with that awful thirst and longing parching his throat; with his poor, weak heart playing with temptation. Nearer, nearer. His hand was on the cupboard now. How faint, and cold, and miserable he was! He could hardly stand, he was trembling so. How delicious the air in the room was! It made him think of what the taste would be—— There was no hand outstretched to draw him back; no one to see——

Yes. A white face peered through the rain-swept panes from the dark night. A face which had been watching there for nearly an hour. A malignant triumph smiled into it as it pressed more eagerly forward to look into the room.

That miserable, tempted man at the cupboard! How could he resist any longer? The very air he breathed was full of the poison that was killing his body and soul.

Ah! It was done.

The clock struck nine. It struck again, half-past. And still the man outside watched—the exultant light of a murderer in his eyes.

Inside—— Was the brandy all finished already? He must have more, more! Wilton staggered to the door, dragging it open, and stumbling out into the raining night. There was no cold or wet for him now; no darkness. What was that? The rushing and roaring of waters, or mocking, merry voices calling to him? He would go and join them. There was plenty to drink there——

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He stumbled on, passing the dark figure that stood by the window, and shrank close against the wall as he hurried by. Where were the voices? To the left. He wheeled round, skirting the wall. He could hear quite distinctly now what they were saying.

How the river was rushing past the mills to-night! How deep and swift and black the waters were! A man who fell into them would not easily——

The tall figure, hiding under the shadow of the wall, crept after the blind, stumbling man, catching glimpses of him through the night and blinding rain. He must be close to the bank now. Ha! what was that? A stifled scream — a heavy plunge——

"You have murdered him!"

Aston turned sharply, white and trembling in every limb. Jane stood beside him, in the rain and the gloom.

"I have been watching you, as you watched him. I know what you did. And now he is dead, and you know it, and meant it to be. And now you shall never marry that baby-faced girl; for I will always stand between!"

CHAPTER XII.

The next day, Anthony came down to Riverbridge to say good-bye. He was late in arriving. The floods were out, and traffic was delayed. Daisy was not in when he arrived. She was out driving with Aston.

Miss Ross soon acquainted him with the news of the engagement. He received it in silence; and a vague suspicion that Miss Ross had had in her mind was set at rest by his quietness. It was eight o'clock when the wheels of the dog-cart were at last heard, and Miss Ross, who had been growing quite anxious, thinking of the floods, hurried, followed by Anthony, to meet Aston and Daisy.

Daisy seemed very tired, and there was something so eager and clinging in the hand-clasp she gave Anthony, that that young man was touched, and seemed to forget to shake hands with Aston.

Aston nodded to him, not apparently noticing the omission. He replied rather shortly to Miss Ross's enquiries, that they had been delayed at one of the houses they had visited, and that the floods had necessitated a longer round home.

Anthony was shocked, when they moved into a brighter light, to see how pale and thin Daisy's face had grown. But she seemed in good spirits, and talked brilliantly through the dinner. On the contrary, Aston was grave and taciturn. Before the end of it he was called away. The river was rising so rapidly, they were afraid for the mill-dam.

The moment Aston left the room Daisy's manner changed — all her brightness vanished.

"I want to go and see the river rushing under the bridge," she said, when they rose from table. "It is not raining now," hastily, as she saw Miss Ross prepare to object, "and Anthony will take care of me."

When Daisy stated an intention in that tone, Miss Ross had learned by experience that it was useless to object.

"You aren't going out without any wrap!" exclaimed Anthony in the hall, as he saw her twist a piece of black lace round her head.

"I'm all right!" she said, with unusual petulance. "I want to get out. I feel suffocated in the house; besides, my dress is thick. I hadn't time to change it for dinner."

Without a word, he took down his own light overcoat and put it round her. She laughed, nestling her chin down into the big collar, which he proceeded to turn up round her neck until her pretty face was almost buried in it.

"It's rather large," he said, with such supreme gravity, that she laughed again; "and the sleeves don't fit very well," wondering how it would feel the next time he put on the coat himself.

"They fit too much," she said, "like the Irishman's coat," and then her face changed and paled. "Do let us get out," she whispered, hurriedly.

Anthony, glancing up the staircase, saw Jane coming down. He opened the door, and they went out into the street.

The wind was so high that Daisy could hardly stand against it. But she clung to his arm, and they went on to the bridge, where a good many people were assembled. She leaned over the low parapet, and looked down into the roaring, foam-flecked water below. Lights gleamed from some of the windows of the mills, where they stood on the corner of the swollen, turbid stream. One or two persons who recognised her came up to speak to her; and, after a few moments, she made Anthony take her away.

"Let us go round by the side-door," she said. "I want to tell you something."

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"I know," he said.

"Has he told you already? He might have left it to me!"

"It was Miss Ross," he replied. "I was waiting for an opportunity to congratulate you."

They did not speak again till they reached the side-door. It was approached by a narrow, flagged street, running down by the other side of the house, and by which all traffic passed down to the mills. Down here they were comparatively sheltered from the wind. A small doorway, between the line of outhouses and the house itself, opened into the garden. Over the doorway was a small sign-board, on which was written:

BREND ASTON.
Licensed Maltster.

A lamp flickering in the wind cast fitful lights upon the name.

She looked up to it, and her eyes grew hard and bright.

"He would not let me hurry home this afternoon, though he saw how much I wanted to come. I believe it was only because you were coming. I wonder why he is so strange to you?" Her eyes were full of resentment and something like humiliation. "Perhaps I have been spoiled, and don't like not to be allowed to have my own way. You and every one have spoiled me, and it did come hard to have to beg him to let me come home, and then——" Her face crimsoned with humbled pride. "I didn't want you to come and find me out, as if I didn't care——"

"Your letter told me you cared," he said, smiling, but his face looked pale in the flickering light of the lamp overhead.

"Oh, I did care." She laid her hand on his arm. "And that is why I wanted—— But he would not come home till I had promised to marry him." Her voice dropped a little. "Next week. He does not want me to tell any one; but I said I should tell you."

The young man looked at her very strangely.

"Daisy," he exclaimed, in a curious, low tone, almost as if he were afraid. "You don't love this man——"

She met his eyes.

And now the light overhead, flickering and casting weird, dancing shadows, fell on two very white, young faces.

She did not speak. She scarcely breathed.

"You do not love him," he said again.

And then, as he read her eyes, her pale, still mouth, a great wave of understanding—of himself, of her—rushed over him, setting every pulse throbbing.

"And I love you." A low, and exceedingly bitter cry broke from him. "And I never understood till now. What am I to do without you? Daisy! If I had known only a little sooner—would you have been my wife?"

But the awakening had been too violent, too sudden. A little trembling movement shook her from head to foot, and she drew back into the doorway, as if to fly from him. The door creaked, as if the sudden gust of wind blowing round the corner of the street had shaken it. Neither noticed the slight sound. Daisy leant her hand heavily against the door.

"I understand it all now," he went on, and the strong young mouth trembled. "It has been love ever since I played with you as a boy, and now it is too late. For even if you were free, I could not ask you now, ruined as I am!" Still she did not speak. Then he forgot himself and remembered only her. "But you, Daisy, don't marry him. You do not love him. He has forced you into the marriage. He is not a good man. There is something in his past life that will darken yours. Break it off while you can! Don't misunderstand me!"

"I don't misunderstand you," she spoke at last. "I can't give him up now. I have promised—and I seem so necessary to him," she said, slowly. "He said this afternoon that if I gave him up, he would kill himself——"

"The coward!" muttered Anthony under his breath.

"He was half mad, I think," she went on, as if not hearing. "He was so afraid I did not mean to marry him after all. Besides——"

She stopped. If she let Anthony even suspect that his welfare had anything to do with the marriage, he would go straight to Aston and defy him, and refuse to take any help.

"Anthony, go away now. I shall marry him. I think you had better not try to see me—or hear of me. Some day——"

Some day! Her voice broke. But she motioned him back from her.

"Anthony, help me!"

And he said not another word.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 49.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI. NOT QUITE CLEAR.

How long they walked in silence, neither of them reckoned. Symee could hardly keep up with her brother's strides, and as he was making his way straight up across country towards the Beacon, she was at last forced to pause.

"Jesse," she said, for she was walking behind him, "wait a moment. I cannot walk as quickly as you do."

The very appeal to his strength conquered the fierce spirit within that was urging him on. In a moment he paused, and, going back a few paces, sat down on a heap of fir poles stacked ready for next season's hops.

"My poor Symee, I forgot that I was walking as if for a wager," he said, smiling, and drawing her very tenderly towards him. "Lean against me, dear; and now let's talk this matter out—as well here as anywhere else. I suppose you can still spare a few minutes before you go back to Rushbrook House. Presently I shall climb up to the Beacon, and go and see 'Liza's grandmother. Do you know what I proposed to Mr. Kestell?"

"No—yes; you mean about Mr. Hoel Fenner's offer? Oh, Jesse, don't accept it."

"Then Mr. Kestell has been talking about it to you," said Jesse, quickly.

"Yes, he was so kind; but he showed me how very, very imprudent it would be of you to leave the firm. Of course you won't do it, Jesse, dear."

"Yes, I shall do it. I have not made up my mind lightly, and I can see no reason to alter. That is not the point, Symee——"

"Oh, but it is. Jesse, please, please be advised. You are so hasty, so determined when you once set your mind upon anything. Of course you couldn't think of going against Mr. Kestell. It would be impossible. Your present position is so safe; the other is so uncertain."

Jesse made a little movement of impatience, which had the effect of shaking Symee and making her more troubled and nervous.

"Symee, do try to judge for yourself, and not repeat all Mr. Kestell's sentiments. Surely I must be a good judge. Have I been so rash all my life that now this independent action is considered preposterous? You know it is not so. I can judge, and I will accept this offer, this splendid offer, and the results will prove whether or not I have been rash. No; that's not the point; but it is this: Will you come and live with me, with the certainty, moral certainty, if not demonstrable certainty, that I can offer you a home without fear of consequences? Symee, haven't we all our lives hoped for this and wished for this? Your presence will make all the difference to my life, and I think I can make you happy. We must be happy when we shall have honest work and each other. Look here, Symee, put away all arguments, which you cannot be expected to understand, and trust your future into my hands. I can, I will make it a happy one."

"Jesse, I don't know what to say. You will misunderstand me; but, dear, dear Jesse, give it up, I do beseech you."

"Give what up?"

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"This offer of Mr. Fenner. I cannot come and live with you; it would only be helping you on to ruin. Keep in the old path, Jesse. What can I do to make you believe it?"

"Nonsense, Symee. Do you mean to say that you prefer staying here, kindly treated, but yet a servant, when you might be free? You might be your own mistress, and work for both of us, and you know it would make all the difference in the world to me. Haven't I been making this plan for you ever since I was a schoolboy; and now, and now——"

Jesse was so much moved that he stood up and crossed his arms whilst the excitement he felt showed itself in every feature of his face.

Symee dared not look up at him; only she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed audibly.

"Don't, don't say all that, Jesse. Haven't I wished for it as much as you? But how can I go against my conscience, and help to spoil your life? I can't—I can't."

"Do you mean to say, Symee, that my words, my strong conviction, have no influence over you?"

"You know they have, Jesse. I would do anything for you, except things that would hurt you."

Jesse impatiently stamped his foot.

"You have been over-persuaded, Symee. You have been worked upon by Mr. Kestell. I have to thank him for this."

"No, no, it is my own idea. I am sure it is right. I saw it plainly directly Mr. Kestell explained it to me."

Symee had risen, looking the picture of misery. She tried to put her two hands round Jesse's arm, but he was too much hurt to bear her touch. Suddenly, however, a fiercer spirit swept over him; he, who was usually as gentle as a woman, now fiercely grasped his sister's arm.

"Symee, this is the last time I ask you. You don't know what you are doing. You are depriving me of the only joy that can enter my life. You are forcing me to give up the idea of home, life, and——"

"You will thank me some day," sobbed Symee, who felt now that she was a martyr to the best cause. Though her heart was torn, yet her spirit was strong. She believed she was saving Jesse in spite of himself.

Jesse let go his sister's arm. He had felt her shrinking away from his touch, and he could not bear it; but though feeling doubly angry with her, and chiefly with Mr. Kestell, who had so well influenced her, he yet felt angry, too, with himself for having given way to this fierce anger before a weak, delicate woman.

"Then we can say no more about the subject. You had better go back now, Symee; and I am going up on to the Beacon."

"And you will give it up, then—this, this offer of Mr. Fenner?" she said, timidly.

"No, I will not," was Jesse's fierce answer as he strode away. It seemed more than he could bear just now to have his sister turning against him, for he had expected her at least to see with his eyes.

Still, even this obstacle did not move him. The more this senseless opposition met him, the more he was determined to succeed in spite of it.

As he walked up the hill he composed the letter of acceptance; and though all pleasure had gone out of the transaction, still Jesse believed, deep down in his heart, that he would succeed, and in a short time he would be able to ask Symee to come to him without even the shadow of a fear of non-success.

Jesse had not forgotten his promise to Mr. Guthrie of visiting 'Liza's grandmother, and he was now bent on this errand. The cottage stood on the edge of the Beacon plateau, and was quite away from the principal cluster of cottages that constituted the village of Rushbrook Beacon. The cottage itself was a picturesque little place, with roses clustering over a wooden porch; though these seemed to be the only luxuries about the place. As Jesse walked up, Caleb Joyce, the farm lad, was just entering, and his mother, in her kitchen, was preparing an evening meal.

"You be Mr. Vicary," said Caleb, grinning. "'Liza's told us you were in these parts."

By this time Jesse had put away his own thoughts, and soon made the family feel quite at their ease; for though he appeared a fine gentleman to them, yet the simple, hearty manner, which made friends for Jesse wherever he went, soon unloosed the tongues, and the joy of hearing of 'Liza assured him a very warm welcome.

"Grandmother's in the parlour," said Mrs. Joyce, presently. "The children do racket so, we let her have that room. Mr. Guthrie was talking to her of you last week, and she has set her heart on seeing

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you. She's a great sufferer with the rheumatics is grannie; but she's a very contented body; and when she's not suffering she likes to have the children about."

These poor people, with their narrow interests, and narrower lives, seemed to have a calming influence on Jesse; and when he was seated by the old lady, whose hands and feet were all crippled with that terrible rheumatic affection so common to the poor, he almost forgot the annoyance he had lately felt, or, at least, he put it away from him for the moment.

"Well, that is kind of you, sir," said old Mrs. Joyce, who, in spite of her helpless condition, was bright and cheery, and looked shrewd and kind-hearted. "Mr. Guthrie—well, he is a kind gentleman; he often comes and sees me; and he and I fell to talking about you the other day. 'Mrs. Joyce,' says he, 'young Mr. Vicary is staying at the Home Farm, and I'll tell him to come and see you.' You be a fine gentleman now, sir. But I was telling Mr. Guthrie I could remember your grandmother well."

Jesse laughed.

"I'm not much of a fine gentleman, Mrs. Joyce. I think 'Liza could tell you that I'm a hard-working man, and that you live in a palace compared to our pokey and dirty houses in Golden Sparrow Street."

"Yes, yes, 'Liza speaks mighty well of you, sir. She's a good scholard, and writes fine letters; but not much good it's done her, except for writing to us. She was bent upon going to London, but I notice now she's bent upon coming home, though she wouldn't say so for the life of her. We all have to learn by experience. That's what I tell Mr. Guthrie when he comes and talks so kindly, and makes me laugh with his funny sayings. It's only them as have a free conscience as can be light-hearted. 'Well,' says he, 'Mrs. Joyce, my conscience's weighted with many things, and yet I'm light-hearted.' And I says to him, 'Sir, it's very onlikely that you go against the rules.'"

"Mr. Guthrie always seems to have a kind word for every one, certainly. But about my grandmother, Mrs. Joyce. Do you know you are the first person I have met who could tell me about my relations?"

"Lor' bless me! am I now? But Mr. Kestell he could tell you more nor I could. You see, Mr. Vicary, when my husband were living in this very cottage, there was another beyond us, about half a mile below here. It's been pulled down this many a long year now; but that's where old Mrs. Vicary came with her daughter. She was a stranger to us, for she came from beyond the forest yonder; but seeing her daughter was a pretty young thing, we did what we could neighbourly for them. But we wondered at the time they took such a tumble-down place as that, seeing they both looked superior kind of folk; but they kept themselves to themselves, and never talked much about their concerns."

"And you remember my mother?"

"Yes, she was as pretty a gal as you could set eyes on; but she hardly ever went into the village, and I don't believe half-a-dozen people saw her. She seemed down-hearted like, as was natural, considering her situation, and no husband to be kind to her."

A sudden idea flashed into Jesse's brain.

"Then, Mrs. Vicary was but her mother-in-law. My father was a Vicary?"

"Well, I don't rightly know all the ins and outs. They were very close about their affairs; and when I asked the young thing one day, when I saw her sitting out by the fir-wood, whether her husband wasn't coming back to her, she blushed as red as a peony, and said: 'Oh, yes, Mrs. Joyce, he's coming as soon as ever he can. He's in foreign parts.' 'Soldiering?' I said. 'No,' says she, 'not soldiering;' and then she seemed to shut up, and would say no more. So I thinks to myself, it's not all plain walking for that pretty young thing. Well, whatever it was, she was our neighbour, and we did our best for her. And it was six weeks after that she was taken ill, and when the twins was born, the doctor, who passed up here, seeing me at the cottage door, said to me: 'That poor young thing won't live, I'm afraid, Mrs. Joyce;' and, true enough, she died in a few days, and I mind how I felt sore for the young husband, who was in foreign parts."

"This is much the same as Mr. Kestell told me," said Jesse, thoughtfully; "but I believe my father died before our birth."

"Well, yes, and so I thought afterwards; and Mr. Kestell was very kind to the old lady, and when I went down to see if I could do anything for her and the poor infants, she sobbed and cried, and said she had lost everything. 'Well,' says I, 'your son will come back and cheer you.' And she looks up startled-like and says, 'My son!' and then seemed to

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take herself up; added, 'No; no one'll come back. He's dead, too; and whatever is to happen to these poor babes I don't know. If it wasn't for Mr. Kestell we should have been in the workhouse long ago.'"

"And my grandmother died, too, soon after?" asked Jesse, beginning to think that there was something about his own history which was not quite as simple as he had always been led to believe.

"Yes, poor soul. What with the trouble of her daughter's death—for now I mind me she always called her her daughter, and there was a likeness between them, too—and the burden of them two babes, she seemed to lose heart. It was not money as was wanting either, for Mr. Kestell he was very kind. We found out afterwards it was his cottage they came to, and never no rent, it's my belief, did he ask for it either. Well, she caught a bad cold on her chest, when the winter set in, and it took her off almost of a sudden like."

"And where were they buried?" asked Vicary; for, strange to say, this question had never occurred to him before.

"Not here, Mr. Vicary; but in the old parish they come from, t'other side of the forest; and Mr. Kestell he saw to it all, and a pretty penny it must have cost him. There were some at the time that wondered why he took so much trouble for the family; but there, I dare say the old lady was a servant of the family, or something like that."

"He has been a good friend to us all our lives," said Jesse, uttering a sentiment he had often before expressed; but now, for the first time, a suspicion had crept in, as he repeated to himself: "There were some at the time that wondered why he took so much trouble for the family."

He must have an answer to that question, and also to another far more important to him than Mr. Kestell's motives. If there had been one feeling which had always ruled Jesse's train of thought, it was that he was a free man, born of honest if poor parents, and, therefore, that he was bound to keep that name unsullied. He would have given up every other advantage in life rather than that one.

He had thanked Heaven again and again that he need not be ashamed to look any one in the face; that the past might be humble, but that it was blameless. And then suddenly this proud belief seemed a little shaken. He did not really doubt that there was some good explanation; but that explanation he must have at once. The doubt, however slight it might be, was galling to his proud nature; it seemed like a weight upon him that he must push off. And then, added to this, and all the more strong because of this, was that other feeling he had had before visiting Mrs. Joyce — the annoyance at Mr. Kestell's having chosen to assert a right which Jesse did not believe he had over his destiny.

"But, Good Heavens! has he that right?" he thought now, as, having quite mechanically taken leave of the old woman, and the others of the household, and having even received messages for 'Liza, and answered them, he walked out once more upon his native heather.

The sun had set over the moor, but the crimson glow illuminated the land of heather, making it look of a deep black purple. A slight mist was rising, as if some fair goddess had spread her thinnest veil over this favoured land. The flowers were falling asleep, and the night-jars had begun to make themselves heard. Jesse walked on down the hill, and at last stopped at a small enclosure grown over and wild with grass and rank weeds; but his keen eyes at once detected the unshapely mounds that told of a cottage having once stood here. He knew the spot of old; but had never suspected before that this was his birthplace. He looked round on the wild scene, and noted that, far above, a few of the Beacon cottage lights could be seen; whilst opposite, where the gorgeous red showed the spot whence the sun had lately disappeared, he gazed at the long line of forest-land and the great clumps of firs.

"Her eyes saw this," he said, sitting down on a low bank, regardless of the damp and dew. "What were her thoughts? Who was my father? Was she not the old woman's daughter——"

Jesse rose suddenly, hurried forward by the strange tumult of his feelings.

"I will go to him. I will go this very evening, and he must tell me. If I have had wrong thoughts, Heaven forgive me; but if he has kept back something from me, then——"

Forgetting all the visions of success which had lately engrossed him, Jesse hurried onwards.

A DARK BIRD.

THAT nocturnal bird, the owl, has been almost universally maligned. Its peculiar

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conditions of existence have invariably caused its appearance to be considered by the superstitious as gloomily sinister. Whether the ornithological specimen be the barn, white, tawny, eagle, little-horned, long-eared, snowy, hawk, little, or barred owl, the condemnation is the same. It was forbidden food by the law of Moses, and in the Bible it is mentioned as a mourning curse in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Job, the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah. The poets have all been severe with it, and Shakespeare speaks of it in connection with cuckoos, goblins, elvish sprites, lizards, puttocks, fatal ravens, wolves, adders, and blind-worms. Its excellent mousing proclivities, though constituting it an economical scavenger, still fail to procure it a deserved popularity. Its evil reputation was noted by Chaucer, who writes:

The jelous swan, ayenst hys deth that singeth,
The oule eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.

This doleful fowl, to whom the ruined sites of ancient Babylon, Bozrah, and Idumea were bequeathed as residences, received no better treatment at the hands of Spenser, who styles it the "ill-fac'd owle, death's dreadful messenger." In "Reed's Old Plays" the same idea is thus expressed:

When screech-owls croak upon the chimney tops,
It's certain that you of a corse shall hear.

Coleridge, in his "Tears in Solitude," discourses of "owlet Atheism;" but the Avonian bard has most frequently accentuated the ominous nature of this spectral king of the night, prefixing to its name such uncomplimentary epithets as fearful, vile, and clamorous.

Although the dictionary-description of this ghostly creature, on the authority of Pope, is a bird that flies when night reigns supreme, it has an ancient and extensive folk-lore. The Athenians, however, have given it a higher place than most nations, honouring it as the sapient symbol of their adopted goddess, Minerva; its love of solitude, scorn of worldly vanities, and its perpetual contemplation tempered with silence, led them to prefer it for this purpose. Singularly enough, its appearance was considered a presage of victory, while its flight originated the proverb:

When the owl flies, the enemy flieth.

This hardly agrees with the testimony of Apuleius, who avers that the Greeks crucified the poor creature alive. That universal conqueror, Constantine the Great, also used the bird as an emblem of wisdom on his gold coinage, with the inscription,

Sapientia principis providentissimi.

This was also placed on Trajan's pillar, on the coins of Seguinus, intending to signify his providence. Again, we have a scarcely appropriate epitaph on the Byzantium of the Cæsars, from the prophetic pen of Mohammed, quoting an Oriental poet: "The spider hath wove his web in the imperial palace, and the owl hath sung her watch-song in the towers of Afrasiab." Fénelon also speaks deprecatingly of the bird, while relating the adventures of Telemachus under the guidance of Minerva herself. Egypt, visited by the son of Ulysses in his travels, sanctified the fowl to the goddess, according to Philostratus, also greeted by the heir to the throne of Ithaca.

Something of this esteem lingers in a few parts of this country, for Hone, in his "Every Day Book," relates that in the West of England, on Saint Valentine's Day, it is the custom for young bachelors, in companies of three, to hunt for an owl and two sparrows before daybreak. These are carried to the village inn before the female portion of the household have arisen, which being accomplished, they are rewarded with three pots of purl; similar contributions being subsequently levied from other inns, if possible. The idea is, that the wisdom of the owl will prevail with the feathered race to mate on that day.

Turning to other authorities, we find that the crying of the bird by night signified the proximity of the listener to the Stygian shore; and its appearance in cities, destruction and waste. Sir Thomas Browne states its advent before the battle with the Parthians near Charræ, presaging the dissolution of Crassus. The author of the "Æneid" foretells the decease of Cato by the appearance of a solitary owl. Alexander Ross, in "Arcana Microcosmi," is witness that the final fate of Valentinian was presaged by an owl that sat on the summit of his bathing house, not to be driven away by stones. Another specimen perched on the roof of the chamber of Commodus Antoninus, just before the Reaper's sickle gathered him to his fathers, in front of Rome and Lanuvium; so says Julius Obsequen's "Book of Prodigies." If we believe Xiphilinus, the feathered biped sung on the apex of Curia previous to Augustus taking a passage in the

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Charonian bark; and the Actian War was prognosticated by a flight of owls into the Temple of Concord.

Sarcastic Butler, in his "Hudibras," notes the Roman horror of the hooting creature, thus:

> The Roman senate, when within
> The city walls an owl was seen,
> Did cause their clergy with lustrations
> (Our synod calls humiliations),
> The round-fac'd prodigy t'avert
> From doing town and country hurt.

This powerful nation deemed the appearance of this bird a dreadful omen, and one of great influence in public affairs. They looked upon it as an inhabitant of deserts and desolate places, dire and inaccessible; and its scream was considered truly discordant and unlike the cry of a bird. The Swan of Avon immortalises the superstition in "Julius Cæsar" (Act i. Sc. 3), where the death of the Emperor is prefaced by these lines:

> . . . . The bird of night did sit
> Ev'n at noon-day upon the market-place
> Houting and shrieking.

But we have already seen that Shakespeare associates the creature with very disreputable society, and he extends the catalogue with toads, snakes, newts, frogs, bats, ban-dogs, dragons, wizards, witches, mummies, sharks, Jews, goats, Turks, Tartars, tigers, basilisks, spirits, and baboons—all suggesting obloquy. Not satisfied with this, he links the bird with such substantives as murder, foul terror, poison, and gall, and prefixes such attributes as dismal-threatening and ill-boding.

A correspondent of "The Book of Days," 1863, vol. ii. p. 732, speaks of two enormous owls which always perch upon the battlements of the family mansion of the Arundels of Wardour, when death is approaching any of its members.

Rowland, in "The Cunning Country Man," ridicules the idea in these lines:

> Wise gosling did but hear the scrich owl crie,
> And told his wife, and straight a pigge did die.

Grose, however, holds fast to the idea with further ambiguous details, saying that a screech-owl, flapping its wings against a sick person's window, foretells that some one of the family will shortly die.

George Smith seems to have had rather a fancy—perhaps ironical—for the herald, if we may judge by the following quotation from his "Six Pastorals," 1770:

> Within my cot, where quiet gave me rest,
> Let the dread screech-owl build her hated nest,
> And from the window o'er the country send
> Her midnight screams to bode my latter end.

Gilbert White, in his quaintly-pleasant "Natural History of Selborne," adds his testimony that the vulgar endorsed this superstition in his time and neighbourhood.

We have Pennant's authority—"Six Indian Nations"—for stating that savages have a superstitious terror of the owl, and are highly displeased with any one imitating its cry. If we recollect aright, however, Cooper and other Indian historians—or romancers?—have made the owl's note one of their signals.

Sir Thomas Browne tells us that Ripa's emblems of superstition were an owl, a hare, and an old woman.

Macaulay, in "St. Kilda," speaks of the silence, singing, chirping, chattering, croaking, feeding, fasting, and flying to the right or left of an owl, as being taken for omens of different degrees or direction.

Pennant, again, in "Zoology," tells us that the eagle-owl is considered a bad omen in cities—the ancients hating them and screech-owls.

Pliny, Ovid, Lucan, and Claudian, all agree in its evil portention. The poor bird has other sins to answer for, for it was said to have brought on the plague and other calamities to Herbipolis, or Wirzberg, in Franconia, by its screeching songs.

An old chap-book has evidently interpreted a once popular feeling, for it says that to dream of owls is ominous of trouble; and Lardner's "Cyclopædia" cites the owl as a bird of bad omen.

A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" says that the inhabitants of Northamptonshire believe that an owl appearing at noonday betokens bad luck to the beholder, and its peculiar snoring noise intensifies the disaster. The same authority speaks of it as a proscribed bird.

A pretty Normandy legend states that the wren brought fire from heaven to earth for the use of man, losing its plumage in the effort. Thereupon every bird presented it with a feather from its own stock, except the owl, on account of which churlish act it has ever since been ashamed to show itself in the day time.

Gilbert White says that the common people believed it struck—at least the specimens called fern-owl, churn-owl, and eve-jar—at weaning calves, inflicting a distemper which they named "puckeridge."

"The Comedy of Errors" (Act i. Sc. 2) has the following, referring to the bird:

> If we obey them not, this will ensue—
> They'll suck our breaths, or pinch us black and blue.

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Lady Macbeth appositely remarks, immediately previous to the death of Duncan (Act ii. Sc. 2):

> It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman
> Which gives the stern'st good night,

and when Macbeth comes to her, fresh from the murder, she again says: "I heard the owl scream." King Henry the Sixth (Act v. Sc. 6) tells Gloucester the owl shrieked at his birth, and when the latter becomes Richard the Third, and hears of his enemies rising in every quarter, he exclaims (Act iv. Sc. 4): "Out on ye, owls! Nothing but songs of death?" The Stratford genius frequently used the bird as a portentous symbol, and he was warranted in so doing.

The owl was frequently associated with an ivy-bush, hence Drayton's lines:

> And like an owle by night to go abroad,
> Roosted all day within an ivy-tod.

Let us instance a few curiosities connected with the bird. The Rev. F. O. Morris, B.A., in his "Records of Animal Sagacity and Character," mentions a specimen that was very partial to music, and another that hatched a chicken and was subsequently very attentive and kind to it. Willsford, in "Nature's Secrets," writes: "Owls whooping after sunset, and in the night, foreshows a fair day to ensue; but, if she names herself in French (Huette), expect then fickle and inconstant weather, but most usually rain." Belon gives an account of the use which falconers made of the owl by tying foxes' tails to it and letting it fly, thus attracting the curiosity of the kite, which was so surprised and consequently captured. Mrs. Elizabeth Pym relates a singular story anent an owl belonging to her sister, which was a great favourite. When she was married, on her wedding-day it flew into the room, sat on the bride's shoulder, flew three times round the apartment, and then departed; which act was at the time looked upon as the forerunner of some disaster, but happily none ever occurred. Worcestershire folk in the Yeme Valley style the bird "Tommy Trotter." The Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer, M.A.O., in "English Folk Lore," 1878, p. 154, says that in Yorkshire "owl-broth" is considered a certain specific for the "chin-cough" or hooping-cough. Shakespeare, again ("Macbeth," Act iv. Sc. 1), mentions "owlet's wing, for a charm."

Old ballads and legends speak of the owl's exalted parentage; and Waterton, in his "Essays on Natural History," 1838, p. 8, quotes a rural song, complaining of its fall from its high estate:

> Once I was a monarch's daughter,
> And sat on a lady's knee;
> But am now a nightly rover,
> Banished to the ivy-tree.
> Crying hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo,
> Hoo, hoo, hoo, my feet are cold.
> Pity me, for here you see me
> Persecuted, poor, and old.

James Orchard Halliwell, in his "Popular Rhymes," under "Nature Songs," p. 256, quotes a fairy tale from "The Gentleman's Magazine," vol. lxxiv. p. 1003, current in Herefordshire. A fairy, disguised as an old distressed woman, went to a baker's shop and begged some dough of the daughter, of whom she obtained a very small piece. This she further requested leave to bake in the oven, where it swelling to the size of a large loaf, the baker's daughter refused to let her have it. She, however, gave the supposed mendicant another piece of dough, but less than the first; this increased still more than the former, and was again retained. A third, still smaller piece, grew even larger than the others, and was again voted too big to give away. The fairy, now convinced of the woman's covetousness, indignantly resumed her proper form, and striking the culprit with her wand, she was transformed into an owl. Ophelia, in "Hamlet" (Act iv. Sc. 5), most probably alludes to this legend: "They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be." Douce, in relating the tale, substitutes Christ for the fairy; but we may fairly doubt whether the owl is deserving of being the vehicle of this Pythagorean transmigration, for Dascent, in his "Popular Tales from the Norse," tells a very similar tale, where the woodpecker has to bear the stigma.

ON THE EMBANKMENT.

CHARING CROSS.

If it were possible to show London at a glance, from Charing Cross that feat were best attempted. In a few turns up and down the pavement, between the pedestals of Landseer's big lions, the scene unrolled before the eyes suggests almost every phase of the great world of London: Broad, dignified Whitehall; the high towers of Westminster; the busy Strand pouring forth its tide of traffic; the handsome columns of St. Martin's—lucky for us if the sweet carillon from the classic tower is

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heard above the roar of traffic. Then the lane of St. Martin's, with its suggestions of the fast-vanishing slums from which it issues; the square itself of Trafalgar, bristling with statues, with its fountains, that play so soberly, and the respectable façade of the National Gallery in the background. Then there is Cockspur Street, bright with shop fronts, but retaining a trace of its former quaint dignity; and then the vista shows us clubland, or the outskirts thereof, and suggests the palaces of the Sybarites, and the sweet, shady side of Pall Mall. And if we turn towards the river and the Embankment, there we have the great avenue that has obliterated Northumberland House, huge, grandiose, cosmopolitan; its magnificence tempered by the big, ugly girders of the railway bridge and a black, ragged show of roofs and chimneys on the opposite shore of the unseen river, the tattered robe of Cinderella showing against the finery of her splendid sister. Then there are the wide crossings and the broad, thronged roadways, where all the world passes along in one continued procession, that ceases only in the small hours of early morning.

In all this whirl and tide of traffic there is one object that recalls the ancient world. In the midst, looking strangely forlorn and neglected in all the busy scene, sits Charles the First upon his prancing steed. The statue is a fine one, although dwarfed by the wide space and towering buildings around, and few people visit it for a closer view than that afforded by the side walks, for, like some island swept by stormy tides, it is a work of some risk to reach it. But, once out of the reach of omnibus poles and swiftly-charging hansoms, we may take breath under the shelter of the brazen image. The pedestal of stone is all worn and weathered, but graceful in flowing curves and flowery ornament. The melancholy King bestrides his handsome steed with easy grace, his face turned to his ancient palace and the scene of his unhappy fate. "Don't let him look towards Whitehall," said the Republican satirist of the period.

That was after the Restoration, when the Royal statue was reinstated near its former site. And where we stand, beneath the statue, there is every reason to believe is the site of the real ancient Charing Cross. The cross itself was still standing, although broken and mutilated, in 1641, when it wrote its own autobiography by the hands of Henry Peacham:

"I am made all of white marble—which is not perceived of every one—and so cemented with mortar, made of the purest lime, Callis sand, whites of eggs, and the strongest wort, that I defie all hatchets and hammers whatsoever." Here the cross narrates the many threatened attempts for its destruction, and proceeds to relate its origin. "Our royal forefather and founder, King Edward the First, you know, built our sister crosses . . . . and ourselves here in London. . . ."

We may realise the scene even now as we hear the bells toll out from the misty gloom that hangs over Westminster, the country wide and open then, and the Abbey showing out from the shade of dripping trees, with the broad river shining beyond hall and palace. From Nottinghamshire the train had set forth—the funeral train of good Queen Eleanor. The heart-broken King had ridden by the bier as far as St. Albans, and then had galloped on to Westminster to see that everything was prepared for his wife's last resting-place. But he had ridden forth again to meet the funeral at Chepe, where the London citizens had gathered about the bier in mourning robes—sorrow in every heart. And there was marshalled the long procession, the bells tolling out dolefully on the way, the great bell of Paul's, the volley of bells from all the convents and friaries round about. At the village of Charing, where a few humble roofs clustered about the crossways, the procession halted, and the great Lords of the Court came forward and marked out the spot where the coffin should rest—a patch of greensward, doubtless, enclosed by the narrow lines of the ancient trackways. And upon this very spot, soon after, was built the famous Cross of Charing.

Next year, in 1890 that is, we may celebrate the six hundredth anniversary of that melancholy day and of the first beginning of Charing Cross. The seventeenth of December, 1290, was the day of the entombment of good Queen Eleanor, and, perhaps, some Royal hand may, on that day, place a wreath upon the tomb of the Queen whose virtues and loving devotion to her lord, still linger with a pleasant savour in the records of musty chronicle.

But we must not forget King Charle[s] about whose fateful figure the grime a[nd] smoke of London town have thick[ly] gathered. Everybody knows the story [o]f River, the brassfounder of Holborn, w[ho]

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bought the statue when the Commonwealth was on, undertaking to break it up and melt it, and who produced many hundreds of knife-handles of brass as the result of his manipulations, which found a ready sale, as trophies or relics, amongst both Cavaliers and Roundheads. But River, more far-seeing than most, had actually buried the statue in his garden, or concealed it in his cellar, and then, when the Restoration came, produced his treasure. Most people know, too, the old story of the artist who designed the statue, one Lesoeur, who is said to have hanged himself on the discovery that he had forgotten to furnish the Royal saddle with a girth. But there is a girth, although but a narrow one, and such as a practical saddler would have shaken his head over; and there were many saddlers about Charing Cross and round about the Meuse in those days.

Charing Cross is shown in Aggas's map, of the time of Queen Elizabeth, somewhat defaced and broken, standing in a "carrefour" of no great extent, formed by a number of streets and lanes, of which Whitehall and the Strand are the chief. The Strand is already bordered with houses, gardens, and orchards. Saint Martin's Lane is there, forming a junction with the Strand; the square tower of the church—still among the fields—appearing some little way up the lane. Along one side of the lane is the great wall of Covent Garden, belonging to the Abbey of Westminster; on the other is the great enclosure of the Royal Meuse, with stables and barracks scattered about within it. Hedge Lane, and the Haymarket, or Hayhill, come winding in from the fields—wide, open fields, where clothes are drying, or perhaps bleaching. Cows are in the fields, and deer in St. James's Park, which last stretches further than now, including the space now known as Pall Mall. A couple of rustics with staff and pitchfork represent the hurrying crowds of to-day. The great enclosure of the Royal Mews is now Trafalgar Square, including the site of the National Gallery, and the barracks in the rear. And Her Majesty's Guards, who now occupy the latter severe and pipeclayed enclosure, are, so to say, the original tenants of the place—driven into a corner by the march of modern improvements; and there bugles have sounded; and squads have paced to and fro; and soldiers have lounged and smoked, and lolled out of windows—anyhow, from the days of the Stuarts.

So the discontented Cavaliers, lounging about their old haunts, and talking over conspiracies and possible feats of arms, in tavern parlours, where host and drawers are all of the right colour, presently look in at the Meuse, where the Parliament soldiers are playing ninepins. Or listen enviously as the trumpets sound boot and saddle, for the Life Guards are going abroad to escort "old Noll"—as our Cavaliers irreverently call the Lord Protector—and the servants are busy about the saddling of the pad-nags. And then the scene changes—like that in a theatre. The Cavalier is in the saddle, and doffs his plumed hat before his Royal master, riding to Whitehall, and the stout troopers of the Commonwealth have gone back to workshop or farm.

But before the brazen image of the late King was replaced, there were terrible scenes to be witnessed at Charing Cross. There was erected the scaffold of revenge, and the slaughter of the so-called regicides began, with all the sickening accessories of hanging, drawing, and quartering. But the scenes became too revolting even for the public opinion of those days, and henceforth the butchery was carried on further afield, at Tyburn.

The scaffold carted away for good and all, Charing Cross resumed its busy, cheerful aspect. Population had thickened about there since the days of Elizabeth, and courts and alleys had sprung up between the cross and the river, some of which had a reputation which it would have been a compliment to call doubtful. In one of these, called Hartshorn Alley, Ben Jonson is supposed to have been born. The only existing representative of these ancient courts is the quiet and highly-respectable Craig's Court, well known to the British army in general; and happy is he who has a good balance there, although the great army agents now date from Charing Cross. And in Craig's Court is to be found one of the last of the aristocratic mansions that once bordered the river hereabouts. Harrington House, a warm, pleasant-looking, red-brick mansion of the early Georgian period, seems as quiet and secluded, in its snug nook, as though the madding world were a hundred miles away.

Who, that has reached middle age, does not remember Northumberland House, and the windowless, but not unsightly, screen, with its turrets, and the conspicuous lion on the top—now enjoying a well-

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deserved repose at Alnwick Castle—the subject of so many legends told to country cousins? Against those well-worn iron rails, where the dust collected so thickly in summer, and the mud in winter, were to be found a little knot of sellers of small merchandises—hot chestnuts, roast potatoes, apples, and fruit-pies—the representatives of a long line of forbears who had plied their trade about Charing Cross and the Meuse time out of mind. Even the red-coated shoeblack, who was a novelty to most people five-and-twenty years ago, had his predecessor in title in one of the heroes of Gay's "Trivia." The reader is also cautioned:

Pass by the Meuse nor try the Thimble's cheats.

For thimblerigging is not of yesterday; and under the Meuse walls a small kind of fair was constantly going on with shows of giants and monstrosities, and with mountebanks and card-sharpers plying their trades.

But Northumberland House has followed its ancient companion, the Meuse, to destruction; the latter not by any means to be regretted, being only a dismal eyesore in its latter days. Originally, as Stowe tells us, "The Meuse, so called, of the King's Faulcons," here was the chief seat of the Royal Hawking establishment, the ground where they were trained, the mews where they were shut up, especially in moulting time, when they required quietude and semi-darkness. Then, in Henry the Eighth's time, on the occurrence of a disastrous fire in the King's stables in Bloomsbury, the Royal stud was removed to the Meuse. And as the "King's Meuse," or, according to modern spelling, Mews, was equivalent to the King's stables, my Lord Duke's stables must be called so too; and so downwards, till every place where a few cab-horses are stabled is named a mews; the practice being apparently confined to London, where it originated. In latter days the Meuse became a receptacle for State papers—quite an Augean stable in that way—some Hercules of the Record Office clearing it out at last, and saving the precious documents, or as much as was left by the rats and mice that ran riot there. And then came the final clearance when Nelson's great victory was fresh in people's minds.

While yet Northumberland Avenue and the Embankment were unthought of, there was a quiet street—and is now—close by, called Northumberland Street, sloping down towards the river; and let us make John Thomas Smith our guide, that famous, gossipy old Keeper of Prints at the British Museum. He tells us of Wood's coal yard, at the foot of Northumberland Street, "where Wood dwells"—alas! dwelt, for the Embankment has swept away all these old wharves—"in the very house where lived Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, strangled in Somerset House." That is, he might have been strangled there, for the method of his death is involved in mystery. Sir Edmundbury had originally been a woodmonger, trading from the very wharf, and obtained by purchase, doubtless, the office of Court Justice, the seat of whose jurisdiction was the Marshalsea in Scotland Yard. Godfrey displayed such courage in the year of the great plague, remaining at his post when all about him fled, that he was knighted upon the return of the Court to Whitehall. He was a busy man, his justiceship including the ferreting out of evil doers and evil doings, as well as sitting in judgement upon them; and perhaps he knew more secrets connected with Royal and noble personages than was altogether safe. Anyhow, he disappeared one day—it was a Saturday, to be precise—having last been seen about the precincts of Saint Clement's Danes in the Strand. Nothing was heard of him for a few days, and then his body was found in a ditch near old Saint Pancras Church. Sir Edmundbury's own sword was thrust through the body—but that had been done after death, as no blood accompanied the wound—and there were distinct marks of strangulation about the neck. His garments were thickly sprinkled with drops of white wax, as if from candles held over his body; and candles of that quality were only used by royalty or nobility, unless in Roman Catholic chapels. Everybody attributed the murder to the Popish Plot, which wretched scare was in progress at the time—a scare which the murder helped to intensify. But nothing was ever really discovered as to the murder. The hint as to Somerset House refers to the Queen and her foreign attendants who were quartered there, but who had no particular reason to fear or hate the worthy justice. But the affair still remains one of the unsolved mysteries of Charing Cross and the Strand.

Another tragic occurrence towards the end of Charles the Second's reign, of which Charing Cross was the scene, has also an indirect connection with old Northumberland House. For following the direction "Cherchez la femme," we

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come upon her in the form of a young girl in her teens—Elizabeth, heiress of the Percys, heiress of Alnwick and Petworth, with manors, baronies, and castles all over the land, all to win with the hand of this child of barely sixteen summers. She had been already a wife, in name, and was a widow when her guardians disposed of her to Thomas Thynne of Longleat—Tom of ten thousand, as he was popularly called, from the amount of his yearly rent-roll. The girl's inclinations had not been consulted in the match, and it is said that she had shown some liking for the handsome and fascinating Count Konigsmark, a Swedish nobleman of wealth, and of the highest rank and distinction in his own country, but of ill repute for evil and unbridled passions. Mr. Thynne had not yet obtained possession of his bride, who had been taken abroad by her friends immediately after the ceremony, and it was said that she was by no means anxious to return.

Such was the state of affairs A.D. 1682, when one day Mr. Thynne was returning in his chariot from Whitehall, where he had been in the company of the Duke of Monmouth. The carriage turned sharply round at Charing Cross, and was just entering Pall Mall, when it was met by three men on horseback, all well armed, who gathered about the carriage. And then, as it seemed, at a word of command, one of the horsemen levelled a musquetoon and fired full at the breast of the unfortunate Mr. Thynne. The horsemen galloped off, and disappeared, leaving their victim in a dying state. Six or seven bullets had entered his body; and after a night of great suffering he expired. So little secrecy had there been about the murder and the preparations for it, that the assassins were soon traced. The chief of them, Captain Fratz, was seized at his lodgings the same night, and the other two were speedily apprehended. But it was evident that these men were only the instruments of some more distinguished personage. A descent was made upon the academy of Monsieur Foubert, in Soho, a kind of school of arms and horsemanship, where gentlemen of distinction were also entertained, an establishment of which the memory is still preserved in Foubert's Place, in Regent Street. Here was staying a certain Count Konigsmark, a younger brother, as it proved, of the suspected nobleman, the hero himself, or, rather, the victim, at a later date, of one of the darkest passages in the annals of the House of Brunswick. But the young Count knew nothing of his brother, he protested—who was supposed to be on his own estates. And then information came from another source that the elder Count Konigsmark had been recognised under a disguise, and was even now trying to make his escape from the kingdom. Before long Konigsmark was arrested at Gravesend, trying to get on board a Swedish vessel lying in the river.

The Count was brought before the King himself at Whitehall, and treated the matter lightly and hardily. Sir John Reresby, who was the justice employed in the case, describes him as a handsome man, with long hair hanging over his shoulders and reaching to his waist. He denied any complicity with the assassins. His secret visit to London was for the purpose of consulting a physician, and on hearing of the assassination of Thynne, as he was known to bear him no goodwill, he thought it best to quit the country. And so he was committed to Newgate.

Soon after, Monsieur Foubert waited upon Sir John Reresby. Count Konigsmark's fortune was ample, said Foubert, and it could not be better employed than in making manifest his innocence. In fact, the envoy delicately suggested that Sir John had only to name his price. Sir John somewhat regretfully owns that he refused the bribe. But the jury before whom the Count was tried at the Old Bailey, were perhaps more accessible to such arguments. Anyhow, he was acquitted, while his three accomplices were condemned and sentenced to death. The scaffold was erected at the end of Pall Mall, looking towards Charing Cross, and the culprits met their fate with remarkable firmness. To the last, Captain Fratz denied the Count's guilt, being inspired by an uncommon attachment and devotion to his service. The other two were mere blind tools, and had simply obeyed his orders. The Captain was a brave soldier, who had won his rank by leading a forlorn hope at the capture of Mons, when he and another were all who came off with life out of fifty. And with the noose about his neck he protested, without bravado, that he did not value life a rush.

As for the Count, although acquitted, he could not face the general reprobation that followed him, not so much for the murder itself as for having left his three brave followers to suffer on his behalf; and, if he

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Apart from the gratification derived from shooting and bagging an occasional buck, and the wild, exhilarating sense of joyous freedom one feels when galloping at headlong speed over the boundless plains, almost intoxicating in its intensity, there were several other little episodes of an enjoyable nature, from which I gathered no small amount of quiet pleasure and amusement during our week's sojourn on the Flats. As, for example: Drawing towards the camp, of an evening, generally about sunset, it amused me greatly to watch the wily dodges, the creepings, and hidings behind bushes of our Hottentot brigade, numbering some score or more, each armed with an old rusty gun of the antiquated flint-lock pattern, called by the Boers, derisively, a "baviaan boud," which literally means, a "baboon leg," because the stock, thin, and only slightly curved, somewhat resembles the nether extremity of that animal. Little stray lots, and single bucks as well, were almost continually passing, and they would sometimes halt in the vicinity of the camp. These unfortunate waifs, consequently, became the objects of persistent and insidious attack by our extremely crafty retainers. A practised game-stalker—or, to use the far more expressive Dutch word, "bekruiper," that is, creeper, as most of the Karoo Hottentots are where game is in any way plentiful—will crawl on his hands and knees, wriggle on his stomach from bush to bush, and donga to donga, up to within short range of a buck, on an open flat in broad daylight, and by that means secure his victim; for at moderate distances he is an excellent marksman.

Again, one afternoon I returned to camp rather earlier than usual. Most of the Hottentots were lying about asleep, or smoking, or patching and mending—the latter a somewhat frequent necessary to a Tottie's wardrobe, as his tattered habiliments usually appear to hang together by the direct interposition of Providence, rather than by any effort of sartorial art—when suddenly some one called out that there was a large troop of bucks coming straight for the camp. A whirlwind of excitement immediately followed this announcement. Never, amongst such a small gathering, had I witnessed such a scene of hubbub and commotion. From waggons, from dongas, from underneath the surrounding bushes, these comical, diminutive people rushed pell-mell into camp, and in the wildest excitement ran for their "baviaan bouds" and hastened to take up their positions in line, bent upon giving the bucks a warm reception. The latter came tearing along until within about a hundred yards of the camp, when, probably recognising their natural enemies, they suddenly diverged, and swept past in a slanting direction. This change of programme decided the action of the Totties, who levelled their pieces and endeavoured to rake them with a brisk fusilade; but in this case, as in that other proverbial one, there was considerably "more noise than wool." Loud and deep were the exclamations of bitter disappointment from all quarters, when it became apparent that not a buck had succumbed to a single shot. Although I have stated that Hottentots as a rule are first-rate marksmen, I should have added that they are only so at standing shots. However, this grand volley—plenty of noise is a Tottie's ideal of heaven, I think—was the chief staple of conversation during the remainder of the afternoon and far into the night, when one Tottie would be heard calling to another from under his blanket:

"Jan, Piet, Claas," or whatever his neighbour's name might be, "my goodness, man! but did you see that big, fat ram that ran past outside near the front? Sapperloots! but he had a large pair of horns, nearly so thick as my leg. Sie, but that was a monster! I could see the stripe on his side as plain as anything in the world. Allah, man! but I do feel so jammar (sorry). Just as I pulled the trigger I found that I had aimed zo efeintjes (a little) too low. Man, but I ought to have taken a vol koll (full sight), then, I swear, I'd have sent him over witte pense boo (white belly uppermost)," and so on. Thus did these simple folk, laughter-loving, and inconsequent of the morrow, rehearse the farcical scene of the afternoon.

Our days and nights on the Flats passed pleasantly enough. We were lucky in having splendid weather, with clear, blue skies and brilliant sunshine, though the heat was by no means oppressive. Here I first witnessed that cruel and illusory phenomenon—the famous mirage of the desert. In one instance, in particular, I remember the illusion was so marvellous and complete that, had I not been positive that no lake existed in that region, nor even in its environments, I would have been prepared to stake all I possessed on the reality of what I saw. I then ceased to wonder at the stories told of travellers who, consumed

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by a fierce thirst, had dropped exhausted and perished miserably in hopeless pursuit of the evasive phantom.

One day's sport very much resembled another. We were singularly free from accidents of any sort. As far as my recollection goes, I do not remember any one of our party getting as much as a spill, even, although great portions of the Flats were riddled with holes by that indefatigable little worker, the meerkat, or pencilled ichneumon. A few weeks previous to our hunt, a man, whom I knew very well indeed, met his death on the same ground that we were on. Going at racing speed in pursuit of some bucks, his horse put its foot into a meerkat-hole, and went a tremendous cropper, dislocating the neck of the rider, who only lived long enough—when a companion rode up to investigate his injuries—to articulate the words: "It's all over with poor Mack!"

I will here relate a little scene which took place between our jovial host of the first night and myself. It happened in this way: When riding along the Flats one afternoon, alone, on the look-out for any bucks that I might come across, I noticed at some distance in front of me a single buck, going at a pretty smart pace. It presently stopped short. I kept on, until, to my surprise, it allowed me to get up to within about two hundred yards of where it stood. I dismounted, took a deliberate aim, and fired, when it immediately fell to my shot. On going up to secure what I considered was my legitimate trophy, I perceived a horseman at some little distance away—I had been too occupied to notice him before—galloping at a furious pace straight for the buck. He reached it before I did, as I had proceeded towards it on foot, not deeming it worth while riding such a short distance from where I had fired. When I got near to where the buck lay, I was greatly surprised to see our host in the act of strapping it behind his saddle. Surprised at seeing what I considered my property being thus coolly "annexed," I called out:

"Thanks; but I will trouble you to leave that buck alone. I only just now shot it."

"What?" said he, in an outburst of passion. "Your buck? You freshly imported greenhorn. What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say," I replied. "That buck is mine. I shot it and, what's more, I am not going to be bounced out of it by your bluster, greenhorn or no greenhorn."

The emphatic nature of my rejoinder appeared to stagger him for a moment; but quickly recovering himself, he took off his hat, and bowing very low, replied, in tones of withering sarcasm, accentuated by a mordant smile, as our gushing romance writers would say:

"Oh, indeed; I presume, then, that you are labouring under the impression that you frightened this buck to death, in the same way that you did your first one!"

I must here explain, that I had been most unmercifully chaffed, right and left, anent the "frightening" episode, the incidents of which I have already related, and which continued a standing joke against me, up to the end of the hunt, and, indeed, for many a long day after. However, keeping my temper under perfect control, I said:

"My good sir, a joke is a joke; but it's not always convincing. Can you show me where you struck the buck?"

So positive was I, that mine was the only shot it had received, that I had not even taken the trouble—as the buck lay with its front quarters hanging over on the off-side of the horse—to investigate the matter, as to whether it had another wound or not.

"Oh, certainly," he rejoined, cooling down considerably. "Why, didn't you observe that it had a broken front leg, when you fired at it? True, your shot behind the shoulder was the fatal one; but mine drew first blood, therefore, according to the rules of sport, the buck belongs to me. I should have ridden it down eventually, had you not shot it. We springbuck hunters consider it bad form, unsportsmanlike, in fact, to shoot a second time at a disabled buck."

This was, of course, a regular clencher for me, for, on examining the buck, I found that what he had stated was perfectly true. It had a broken front leg. So, frankly acknowledging my ignorance of the unwritten code and my obliviousness of the buck's disablement, as well—the leg was broken just above the fetlock, and it certainly would have taken keener, or, anyhow, more experienced eyes than mine to discern the fact, as its gait and speed in running appeared to me quite normal—I could not do less than cry peccavi. We then cemented the renewal of our friendship, through the medium of a pipe, or rather two pipes, of peace, under

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the grateful shade of a spreading mimosa, and afterwards rode in the direction of the camp, on the best of terms.

Our daily complement of slaughtered bucks ranged from between twenty to thirty; the total amounting, at the end of the week, to over a hundred. The number that fell to my own gun amounted to five. Not so bad, I was told, for a young beginner. Indeed, there were some who did not reach even that modest little figure; and one unfortunate individual, a Civil Commissioner's swell clerk, from a neighbouring town, arrayed in faultless hunting-costume, and whose swagger-talk would lead one to believe that shooting springbucks was as easy as falling off a log, did not score at all!

On Saturday we separated for our several homes, with mutual expressions of satisfaction, and many protestations and assurances that we would do our utmost endeavours to keep up the annual gathering so conducive to keen enjoyment and pleasant goodfellowship.

GAMBLING AND BURGLING.

GAMBLING and burgling always occupy a good deal of public attention during the course of a year; and during the past year they have acquired especial prominence both in the Law Courts and in the High Court of Parliament. There is not a very obvious connection between the two, yet the subtle moralist may find an association. Both are pursuits of men who ought to be otherwise, and more profitably, engaged. Both are the expressions of a desire to acquire riches at one stroke—or, at the most, two strokes—and to avoid the monotony of continuous labour. And both are the results of radical misconceptions on the part of the individual practitioners.

Nobody ever gets rich by gambling; but it is open to demonstration that, if the same amount of skill, of cerebral energy, of mental dexterity, and of acute perception, were expended in productive work of some kind as is expended on games of chance, the rewards would be substantial and certain. Again, the burglar who burgles on a large scale is playing against fearful odds, and is certain to come to grief sooner or later; while, if he burgles on a small scale, he can but snatch a precarious and insignificant pittance, considerably below what he might easily earn by legitimate industry in lawful hours.

There is, perhaps, a charm of excitement in burglary which fascinates the professional outlaw, even as the excitement of the turf, or of cards, enthralls the professional gamester. But to take a plain, practical view of both pursuits, and one apart altogether from the ethics of the matter, is to lead one to the conclusion that neither game is worth the candle.

The law, of course, takes other views of both. The burglar indulges in his exciting career at the expense of the community, and injures everybody, including himself. The gambler indulges in his habitual excitement without injuring, directly, anybody but himself and those dependent on him, who, from a social point of view, may be regarded as part of himself. The burglar, therefore, is objective in his existence; the gambler, subjective. To put it otherwise, the burglar is a common enemy, and the gambler nobody's enemy but his own.

The great fact which the community has to consider, and the law to provide for, is that the burglar is one who is in permanent rebellion against society, and is, by the very nature of his employment, both degraded and desperate. And this we are compelled to assume, in spite of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's humorous theory that:

> When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling,
> When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
> He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,
> And listen to the merry village chime.

This may have been the case with the "Pirates of Penzance," and perhaps it is literally true that,

> When the coster's finished jumping on his mother
> He loves to lie a-basking in the sun,

although one may well doubt if

> When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
> Or maturing his felonious little plans,
> His capacity for innocent enjoyment
> Is just as great as any honest man's.

But the public, on whom he preys, are not disposed to consider such possibilities. And it is reasonable to assume that the great majority of orderly persons decidedly approve of the recent Act, providing for the flogging of burglars. There is little doubt that the fear of bodily pain will serve as a better check than mere imprisonment, although it is probable enough that the deterrent effects of corporal punishment are somewhat exaggerated. It is to be remembered, however, that punishment has not only to be deterrent—it has to be retributive; and it is absurd to call the flogging of brutal criminals cruel and unjust, when their very crimes are the product of cruelty and injustice.

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Yet some have done this; and the Act for flogging was opposed in Parliament by some learned legislators on the ground that Courts of Justice are not infallible, and that in some cases innocent men might be flogged. If this argument were carried to its logical issue, we should have no punishment meted out to criminals at all. Innocent men have, unhappily, occasionally suffered death for murders which they did not commit; but the errors of justice have not been frequent or glaring enough to afford a good argument for the abrogation of the death-penalty. And, really, the chances of innocent men being convicted of burglariously entering a house with arms in their possession, are of the most meagre description. The yard-arm had a very wholesome effect on piracy; and it is reasonable to believe that the "cat" will have a wholesome effect on burglary.

It is worth noting that while Parliament was engaged in deciding upon this vigorous treatment of burglars, a confession was made by the Home Secretary that the law is powerless to deal with persons found in gambling-houses. All that the magistrate can do is to inflict a small fine, which, in the case of persons who have money with which to gamble, is no punishment at all. And upon this statement of the condition of the law there was a considerable disposition to agitate for its alteration.

But it is easy to be rash and inconsiderate on this question. There is a universal passion—we find it in all races—for games of skill and chance; and such gaming, when engaged in for money stakes, we call Gambling.

Yet money-stakes are played for otherwise than in games of chance, and we call it—Speculation. Is a "corner" in copper so much more moral and defensible than a pool in cards? The subject opens up too wide and thorny a field of discussion to enter upon here; but it is probable that a great deal of misconception exists upon the ethics of gambling.

It is remarkable that, once upon a time, "gamester" and "cheater" were synonymous terms; but it is also remarkable that "wretch" was once a term of endearment. The usage and meaning of words change with time, and no man nowadays would dare to characterise another as a "cheater" merely because he is a "gamester." From cock-fighting to cribbage may be a long range, but there is scope for the gambler all through.

The charm of chance is irresistible to certain minds—by no means of the most ignoble order. It is the charm of chance that sends men with beating hearts to the front amid a hail of bullets; or with moistened eye to the backwoods in search of fortune. It is also the charm of chance that leads others to baccarat and bookmaking.

Many lives have been ruined and homes wrecked by gambling; yet not nearly so many as have been wasted by excessive drinking. What, however, is to be borne in mind, in considering gambling from a social and legislative point of view, is, that it is an individual vice. It may be foolish or wrong to stake money upon the throw of the dice, or the turn of a card, or the pace of a horse, or the roll of a billiard-ball; but it is not a crime against Society. Men do not need "Hells," or Clubs, or Tables, if they wish to gamble. Enthusiasts have been known to wager on the comparative speed of two flies on a window-pane, or on the durable qualities of two lumps of tea-moistened sugar.

The Social Guardian may take precautionary measures to keep temptation out of the way of the weak and foolish, and, therefore, it forbids any person to keep a public establishment for the direct purpose of gambling. But it is very questionable if the Social Guardian has any right to restrain any individual from parting, however wrongfully, with his own money in stakes or bets. There is a certain class, as we know by the old proverb, with whom the parting comes soon.

To sum up: Burgling may and should be prevented by the most rigorous means the law can devise. But although the spirit of gambling may be eradicated from individuals by bitter experience, it never can be from a community by Acts of legislation.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day, Miss Ross and Daisy went up to London. Aston told his cousin that he and Daisy were to be married privately in town. A visit to London—especially when it was done comfortably in the way of travelling and hotels—was

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one of the delights of Miss Ross's heart. But to-day, in spite of the fact that she need not think of expense, and that they were to put up at her favourite hotel, she went with extreme reluctance. In her opinion, the whole marriage was a mistake. To have it carried out in this extraordinary, clandestine way, made everything ten times worse.

It was ridiculous. Brend Aston, with his position in Riverbridge. At his age, too! It was not as if he were a young, romantic man, or had anything to be ashamed of. There was more still. It was a slight to Daisy. What would people think? She would have no time to get a trousseau. And not to be allowed to tell her friends! Aston silenced her at last, rather savagely. He would never have taken her into his confidence, if he could have done without. As it was, he took care only to tell her just before they started, when she would have no opportunity of betraying the fact to Jane. The first reason he gave her for his wishing them to go off to London at once was, the pretence that the floods were growing dangerous, and that at any moment the garden and lower part of the house might be inundated. It had happened once or twice before, so the excuse was a good one.

Whether Jane believed the given reason of their departure, Aston did not know. She said nothing, and he went on as if she were not in existence. He was acting like a madman. He was like a man cutting away with his own hands the supports that kept up the roof which, at any moment, might fall and crush him in its ruins.

But he went on. He was mad—mad with this fierce, ungovernable love which had taken possession of him. To call Daisy his own for a week, he would have risked his life a dozen times over. If he could marry her before Jane betrayed him, it could not be undone. She was his for life. On the contrary, if she should hear the truth first, he was certain she would never marry him at all.

He did not attempt to follow them at once to London. He made all his preparations secretly from Riverbridge, outwardly absorbed in his work and the anxieties dependent on the dangerous state of the river. In reality he had only one thought, night and day—Daisy.

He wrote to Miss Ross, and at his wish she and Daisy left the hotel at which they were staying, and removed to another in quite a different neighbourhood. Miss Ross, though revolting more and more against the absurd mystery, obeyed every instruction he gave her to the letter.

The only thing that made the matter tolerable was the shopping; and even this was marred by the total lack of interest Daisy showed in her purchases.

Aston had already procured a special license. The next thing was to evade Jane's vigilance, and go up to town; marry Daisy, and then hurry off to some distant country. He would not think of the after consequences. In the meantime he did not overlook the fact that a man cannot get on without money. For years, ever since he had known that he had no right to the property, he had been putting by a large annual income, living, as Miss Ross considered, rather too economically for his position. This was invested in foreign stocks; and even, if compelled to give up the mills, he would still have sufficient to live comfortably upon. As for Jane's threats of denouncing him as a murderer, they would not hold ground a moment. Any man might break a glass full of brandy, and leave the bottle in an unlocked cupboard. No one could try a man for that; even though another should drink himself into an attack of delirium tremens, and throw himself into the river when the madness was on him. Aston began almost to feel, as the week drew to its close, that he had it all his own way. Wilton was dead. Anthony had left England. The wedding was to take place at two o'clock, in a quiet city church. He was to meet Daisy there.

After the wedding, Miss Ross was to return to the hotel for another week, and he and Daisy were to go off together. On the Friday morning he went as usual down to the mills. But he did not stay long. He left them and went by a back way into the town, and so to the station. There he caught the ten o'clock train to London. He took no luggage with him, having ordered in town all that he would want. It was a quarter to two when he arrived at last at that old-fashioned city church. The length of that short period of waiting seemed measured by hours. The wildest fears possessed him. Every moment some new possibility struck him. Jane had tracked them after all. Daisy had repented her promise. Some accident had happened to her. He looked so pale and strange as he stood waiting there in the dusty, empty old church, that the old pew-opener

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felt quite excited herself over the approaching wedding, and odds and ends of romances which she had read in the days of her youth came back to her. It was a curious fancy for this pale, handsome man to be married in this sleepy, forsaken old church, which rarely ever saw a wedding, and which was haunted by the ghosts of long-dead congregations, and saddened with the sadness that shadows all places from which human lives and interests have ebbed, leaving them empty, and silent, and desolate.

But as the clock struck two, the brougham containing Daisy and Miss Ross arrived; and Aston, his pale face now flushed, his eyes bright and glowing, hurried outside to help Daisy alight. She put her hand on his arm, and they entered the church together. Daisy herself had no consciousness of her surroundings. She went where he led her. She answered when he spoke to her. She knelt at the altar, and there she took him for her husband, and gave herself into his keeping, so long as earthly life should last.

Of her feelings, she could have given no account. Whether all her being had been dulled from the agony of her heart's aching, or whether it were passive resignation to her fate, she did not know.

She seemed to be living and acting in a dream. She did not wake out of it till they stood in the vestry.

"Oh, by-the-bye, Brend," said Miss Ross, who had been chatting away cheerfully to the clergyman and Daisy, doing what she thought her best to enliven the most depressing wedding she had ever assisted at, "I had a note from Jane this morning, asking me to give you this one which was enclosed, directly you arrived. I forgot all about it till this moment. What a queer woman she is! She might just as well have said what she wanted to say to you this morning. I suppose she has found out that you are to be married to-day, and that it is her way of congratulating you."

The pen slipped from Aston's fingers, but he caught it up again and gave it to Daisy. Daisy had not heard the remark. She took the pen mechanically, signing her name for the last time. Then she shuddered from head to foot, and a half-choked cry broke from her. Suddenly, all that this marriage meant rushed over her.

"Oh, I can't!" and she turned sharply away.

"My darling! What is it?"

Her hands were clasped close in Aston's, and then she knew that that passionate rebellion was too late. She was his; only death now could part them. She grew so white that they thought she would faint. They brought her water, and at last Aston drew her hand in his arm, and they went out of the vestry. At the door of the church he put her in the brougham that was waiting, and helped Miss Ross to follow. Then, regardless of that good lady's shocked amazement, he closed the door on them.

"Take her back to the hotel," he said, cutting short her wondering exclamations. "I have some business to do; I shall join you shortly," and he gave the order for the coachman to drive on before she could utter another word. Left standing alone on the pavement, heedless of the curious staring of the few people who had assembled outside the door, he glanced again at the note Miss Ross had given him. He had already looked at it in the vestry. It was from Jane.

"I must see you. I know you are to be married. I will see you first. Come to me at the old address at once. If you do not come, she shall know everything; and if she is the woman I believe her to be, it will be the death-blow to your love. This is not an idle threat. I have arranged it all; for all your scheming, you will not be able to prevent my letting her know!"

He felt that he would not. He knew the woman. There was no baffling her relentless purpose. As she had dogged his steps, discovered his secret, learned even to the hour at which he was to be married, so would she communicate with Daisy, and blast for ever his hope of happiness. He, too, knew of what Daisy was made. She would never forgive him. He hurried on, lashed by the scorpions of rage, baffled hope, and fierce despair. To think that she had been his, his very own for one brief ten minutes, and that now—— If he lost her—— No! he would not lose her. She should be his if——

His heart was full of hate and murder as he hastened to keep the appointment made by the woman who for the day controlled his fate.

CHAPTER XIV.

HALF an hour after Daisy and Miss Ross reached the hotel, a telegram arrived for

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Miss Ross. It was from Aston, and must have been sent off directly he parted from them.

"Start at once for home. Circumstances have arisen which prevent my coming back to you to-day. If you value my happiness you will not delay a moment. Keep the marriage secret until I give you leave to speak. No one knows anything in the place yet. "B. ASTON."

The astonishment, the bewilderment of the two—or rather of Miss Ross, for Daisy's strange apathy was scarcely broken by it—were unbounded. Miss Ross was certain that Jane was mixed up in the extraordinary affair. It made matters ten times worse. For once, she was seriously angry with Aston, and flatly rebelled to obey this last new freak, as she called it.

But Daisy at last roused herself to speak.

"He must have some good reason," she said, "and we had better obey him. See, if we make haste we shall catch the four o'clock train."

She set to work to hurry on their preparations with so much eagerness that Miss Ross began to have a curious suspicion that the girl was more relieved than otherwise at this extraordinary change in her husband's plans. As they journeyed down to Riverbridge the suspicion grew till it became a certainty. Daisy's face brightened, her manner became less feverishly excited, as if she dreaded every moment that they would be stopped, and she laughed quite happily when they steamed at last into Riverbridge.

Poor Miss Ross was dumbfounded. That the bridegroom should behave in such an unprecedented fashion was astounding enough; but that the bride should be so unequivocally relieved at his conduct was the last stroke. But another surprise was awaiting them. When they reached the house they found they had been expected. Jane was in town. The servants said she had started off hastily that morning. But she had told them to have everything ready for Miss Ross and Miss Garth, who would return that day. Miss Ross felt that matters were growing more complicated. All her old fear and dislike of the sullen-faced housekeeper returned in full force, with others too black to entertain.

Why had Brend taken her into his confidence? She was intensely thankful that Daisy asked no questions and seemed to feel no curiosity or surprise at the housekeeper's strange absence and knowledge of their affairs. But, just as they had finished dinner, and had gone into the sitting-room, there came a ring at the street door.

A visitor was announced. It was Anthony.

Daisy did not rise as he entered, but sat staring at him as if he were a ghost. When he had greeted Miss Ross, who was beginning to feel that the surprises were growing rather too much for her, he went over to Daisy.

"What is it?" he exclaimed, as he saw how white her face was. "Did not you think I would come when you sent for me? Oh, I've not come too late?"

"We thought you had gone to Australia," said Miss Ross, anxious to divert his attention from Daisy, who seemed so strangely upset.

"What do you mean?" asked Daisy at last, rising and trying to laugh. "I did not send for you. I thought you had left England."

He stared at her bewildered. Then pulled out a telegram.

"Didn't you send me that this afternoon," he asked, a troubled note in his voice, "asking me to come to you without fail this evening?"

Daisy took it and read it mechanically. It purported to be from her, and had been apparently sent from the hotel where she and Miss Ross had been staying. She handed it on to Miss Ross.

"What does it all mean?" exclaimed Daisy.

Such a host of dark surmises rushed through Miss Ross's mind, that, afraid of betraying herself, she made an excuse to leave the room. They had better talk it out between themselves.

Daisy looked up at Anthony. She saw how pale and thin he had grown. All the old boyish look had gone. She did not dare think of what had changed him so.

"I never sent you that telegram," she said. "Who could have done it?"

"It is queer, certainly. And what could have been anybody's motive for sending it?"

"We were staying at that hotel. We only came back here this afternoon," flushing hotly.

"It could not have been a trick." He looked down keenly into her face. "Daisy!" with quick fear, "you aren't in trouble?"

"No." She caught her breath hard. Then, to change the subject: "Why are you still in England?"

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"I don't know," he said, rather hardly; that little catch making it difficult to speak at all. "I had a letter the day after I came down here from some one calling himself or herself my friend, and begging me to delay my journey for ten days or a fortnight, and promising that, at the end of that time, I should hear 'something very much to my advantage.' Quite mysterious, isn't it? But I don't think I should have stayed for an anonymous letter concerning so very shadowy an advantage had not——the person begged me to do so for your sake, too. Confound them!" with an uncontrollable burst of anger. "Why could they not speak plainly? They hinted that you were in danger."

"Why should you be troubled about my affairs?" she said, trying to speak in her usual voice. "I am all right. I——" Perhaps unconsciously her eyes fell to the hand on which gleamed the wedding-ring. Up till that moment, from some strange feeling, she had kept her hand hidden in the folds of her dress. He followed her look. As his eyes caught the gleam of the gold ring he started, then grew very pale. "I am married," she said, seeing his discovery. "This morning, in London."

There was a short silence. Anthony drew back a few paces, and stood with averted face. Then he turned to her again.

"Where is Mr. Aston? The servant said he was not here."

The colour rushed crimson over her cheek. For the first time it struck her how very strange his conduct had been. She hesitated; then told him what had happened. Also how Mr. Aston had wished her to keep her marriage secret. The story seemed stranger than ever as she told it; and when she ended there was a curious, appealing, frightened look in her eyes, that filled him with rage and doubt. It made matters worse to feel that he had no right, no power to help her any more. Her life belonged to this man.

As her marriage rose up before her, as she suddenly realised at last to the utmost what it meant to her, Daisy's self-control was swept away, and she sank down into a chair, hiding her face with her hands, and breaking into wild, uncontrollable sobbing. Now that it was done, the sacrifice seemed too hard for her. Why had she yielded up her life — allowed herself to be conquered by his cruel, imperious will?

The strain, mental and physical, of the last few days had been greater than she knew. A reaction had suddenly set in, and she broke down for the moment completely.

"Oh, I heard those steps up and down all night before I went up to London; I know they were trying to warn me. But it came too late—too late."

For an instant, a fierce, despairing regret swept over him that he had not left for Australia after all. It was torture for him to be near her, and to know that her life was another man's. Then, as the mist of his own passion and pain cleared from his eyes, and he saw her trouble, he was full of remorse and shame for his selfishness.

"I suppose business called him away?" he said, quietly, though his voice was hoarse with the tumult of feeling that had shaken him. "And the sounds you heard were only fancy."

She looked up.

"Anthony, I am afraid; I have been afraid ever since I have been in this house. It is full of darkness and mystery. And when I think that——"

He came a little nearer; then stopped. But he drew nearer again—nearer, till he was by her side.

"Daisy!" he whispered. "Daisy!" The colour rushed red into his face; his eyes grew strangely bright. "You must not—— Oh, Daisy! Can't I help you? You know——" He made one last effort to choke back the words that chivalry, honour, manhood denied. But her tears maddened him, weakened as he already was by his own pain. "Let me help you. I love you——"

The words reached her through her sobbing.

"Oh, Anthony! Anthony!"

Her crying was too violent to be controlled, but she shrank away from him, drooping lower in the chair.

When men take one step downwards, the second comes so easy, and it is so hard to draw back.

"Daisy, you don't love him. You are afraid of him. He is not a good man——"

"Oh, Anthony!" She lifted her head, dashing the blinding tears from her eyes. "Do you despise me so much as this? Oh! it was all my fault. I have been so wicked! Oh! Go away! How can I look at you again?"

Perhaps, in his passion, his despair at feeling her lost to him for ever, he had scarcely known what he was saying. As

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she spoke, as he saw the look in her face, he suddenly understood. He drew sharply back, flushing hot, then paling. He understood for the first time what dishonour feels to a man whose life has hitherto been stainless.

For an instant or two neither spoke nor looked at the other. It seemed a dreadful thing that the old faith, the old trust, the old tender friendship and belief in each other's loyalty, should lie crushed and bruised between them.

Then she spoke, saying what she thought was best.

"Mr. Aston has been very kind to me He is a good man; I know it. If it had not been so, I should never have married him. I am not worthy of him, but I will do my utmost to be a good wife to him; and you and I must never see each other again. Perhaps Heaven will forgive us."

"Good-bye," he said, hoarsely, meeting her eyes. Then he turned sharply on his heel and quitted the room.

As he went out of the house he came face to face with Aston. The look in the two men's eyes as they met was an ugly one. Anthony hated and distrusted Aston. The passive dislike he had felt from the beginning had gradually changed into a violent antipathy. He was certain he had in a way forced Daisy into the marriage; and the sense of her helplessness, his contempt for the sentimental trickery that had caught her in his toils, added to his own smart, made him mad with hate and rage.

Brend Aston, whose face betrayed the keen mental crisis he had passed through, returned the hatred in full force. To see him coming now out of the house where Daisy was, was the last stroke to his jealous fury.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, hoarsely.

Anthony's eyes blazed at the insulting tone.

"I came to see—Miss Garth. As an old friend, I have that right."

"You have no right without my permission. She is my wife."

"So she told me. Heaven help her!"

With a quick stride Aston was at Anthony's side.

"What do you mean? By Heaven——"

"I mean this"—the young man faced him with erect head—"you played on her goodness, her ignorance, her pity. You tricked her and lied to her——"

The words were killed on his lips, as Aston, mad with rage, suddenly struck him on the mouth with such force that Anthony staggered back, the blood rushing from his cut lips.

The next second the young man, with a spring like a panther's, had flung himself on Aston, seizing him by the throat. Then his grip relaxed, and he fell back at a sudden thought of Daisy.

"I shall not forget that blow," he said, in a choked, hoarse voice. "For her sake I will let you go. Her name shall not be dragged into our quarrel. But I tell you this: if you make her unhappy; if you—— By Heaven, if you so much as sadden a day of her life, I will hunt you down like a sleuth-hound. I know you have a secret. I will find it out to punish you, if it takes every moment of my life."

He walked on across the bridge. Luckily the street was almost deserted, while the quarrel, which had been as swift as it was violent, had not been noticed in the dusk of the night. A momentary shame of his conduct stung Aston. But it passed, swallowed up in the torrent of other feelings that rolled over him. Rage and hate against Anthony and Jane, baffled love, and a great dread that made him perfectly desperate. But he had driven off Anthony, Daisy was his own, and he had defied Jane. It had caused him some little delay, going back to the hotel after keeping the appointment. His heart had sunk within him when he found that they had left. His first thought was that Jane had already betrayed him, and that Daisy had gone away and hid herself. But a chambermaid, who had picked up the telegram on the bedroom floor after their departure, was able to tell him what was on it. He had not sent it. He guessed only too well who had done so. Cursing her in his heart, he had driven off as fast as he could to the station. He had just missed a train, but caught the next, and arrived at the house as Anthony was leaving it.

As he entered it now he felt that nothing should part him from Daisy again. A mail train passed through Riverbridge at two in the morning. He would persuade her to come away secretly with him that night. He went down the hall, wondering in what part of the house she was. He turned into the dining-room, forgetting all else now but his love and triumph, and there came face to face with Jane.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND
A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 50.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVII. ARRESTED.

THERE was joy in Rushbrook House this evening, for the mistress of the place seemed suddenly to have made a step in the right direction. As many fanciful invalids are apt to do, she had changed her lugubrious ideas of seclusion, and now declared that she felt well enough to dine with her family. In a small way it was quite a little jubilee festivity, and Mr. Kestell's face was radiant with happiness. He could hardly make enough of his wife; and even Amice forgot her secret trouble as she saw her mother sitting, dressed in a grey brocade, trimmed profusely with old lace, ready to be taken in to dinner by her husband.

Amice went up to her mother and stroked her hand.

"Mother, this is a pleasure," she said, softly. At this moment they were alone, and alone with her mother Amice was herself. "I believe it is the idea of losing Elva that has made you stay downstairs."

This was true enough; the sudden excitement of a lover and suitor had roused her.

"What do you think of him, Amice? I don't suppose, however, he is your sort. You would only be fit to marry a clergyman."

Amice smiled; she was used to these jokes.

"I don't want to marry any one, mother dear, but I think the London life will suit Elva. She will like meeting clever people; and Mr. Hoel Fenner is thought so well of, and he is so clever and good-looking."

"Well, I call him charming. But Elva is so hard to please. Do you think she will decide in his favour? Of course, he is not rich, and has no title; still, the Fenners are a very old family; they are related to the Courtneys and the Pellews. Just get me down the 'Peerage,' dear. Your aunt Fitzgerald will be mad with jealousy that one of my daughters should be married first, and she will, I know, find something spiteful to say about Mr. Fenner's family."

Amice did not answer. The worst of her, her mother often said, was that if you spoke evil of any one, she was silent. And this really made poor Amice a very dull companion to a woman whose turn of mind was decidedly worldly.

"Yes, here it is; the Pellews are first cousins to the Fenners. Strange! I must ask Mr. Fenner if he knows any of them. When Mrs. Eagle Bennison next calls, I should like to see her. She knows all the modern generations better than I do. She does like people of title, because she has none herself. That is why she is always harping on her grandfather."

"But Elva will not like this talked about till she has made up her mind."

"Of course she will be talked about; but it will come all right. Girls don't accept in this way, and find out they don't like a man. I believe she really likes him."

"I think she will do so," said Amice, more guardedly. "But Elva will not do things by halves; she will love him with all her heart, or not at all."

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"Young ladies were not like this when I was young. When suitors appeared for us girls, it was my father who chose. We should not have dared to refuse. But now girls are so very independent."

Mrs. Kestell did not add that only one suitor, her husband, had ever proposed for her hand.

At this moment Mr. Kestell himself appeared. He had taken such pains with his evening toilet, that even his wife smiled at the result.

"There is no dinner-party, Josiah. Where's Elva? Late as usual?"

"No; I heard her. She thinks now she is a privileged person. Well, dear, this is nice."

Amice had retired at her father's approach, and as Mr. Kestell sat down near his wife, and clasped her hand in both his, they might have still, to all appearance, been lovers.

"Well, I do feel better. It is, I believe, because I have left off Dr. Horne's prescription; he does not in the least understand my case. Elva, my dear, let me look at you. What a pity Mr. Fenner is not here! That pale salmon-colour suits her admirably, doesn't it, Josiah?"

"Please, mamma, don't begin to criticise dress," laughed Elva; "it reminds me of Mrs. Eagle Bennison whom I have just met. She told me that some of the ladies who attended her meeting for the Training of the Adult Poor were really so dowdy, that she feared they did not fully recognise how essential it was to dress up to their station! By the way, Amice, you are in sad disgrace with her serene highness; she says that if you will go and nurse the sick in their own homes, you will undo all the good which the Taps means to accomplish. I told her the poor looked upon you as one of themselves, so that you would not injure the Taps. And she said, 'How very shocking!' And she begs you will go and talk it over with her."

"I quite agree with her," said poor Mrs. Kestell, taking her husband's arm, whilst the two sisters followed them into the dining-room.

That quartette would have delighted any aristocratic eye—the handsome, benign-looking father, the gentle mother in grey brocade, the two daughters, both so rich in gifts of all kinds; then, to add to this, all the outward and very visible signs of taste, culture, and wealth.

If there were any shadow on the brilliant picture, it was Amice's nervous, startled look when addressed by her father; but this evening Elva and Mrs. Kestell carried on the conversation, and both the master of the house and Amice remained silent.

"By the way, papa," said the former, when the servants had retired, "what is the matter with Symee? Her eyes were as red as lobsters with crying whilst she was dressing me. She could only say that Jesse was angry with her, but that you had been very kind."

Mr. Kestell frowned slightly.

"It is merely that that foolish fellow wants to throw up his work for something Mr. Fenner has offered him; but Fenner knows nothing of Vicary's capabilities, and it is really leading him to ruin. I met Symee when I went to dress, and told her she had done quite rightly in not encouraging her brother."

"Why should not Jesse Vicary choose for himself?" said Amice, looking up and gazing at her father with those deep-seeing blue eyes which annoyed him so much.

"Because, naturally, having always taken great interest in him, I wish to save him from making a mistake. Besides, he wants to take Symee away from here and make a home for her in those slums. The suggestion is absurd and impossible."

"I am glad you put your foot down upon it," said Mrs. Kestell. "We couldn't possibly spare Symee now, she is so useful to me; and really, after all the trouble you took for those penniless children, you have a right to settle what you think best for them."

"Why have we a right?" said Amice; and Elva, noting her father's annoyance, made a sign to her sister to be quiet.

"I think, Amice, it would be better you should not interfere about this matter. I cannot explain all the strong reasons why it is better that Vicary should steadily go on in his present position. Believe me, they are for his advantage."

"Mr. Fenner will agree with you, I am sure," said Elva, "when you explain it to him."

"Of course he will. So Mr. Fenner has already written to you, I see," said Mr. Kestell, turning the subject.

"Yes; he sent me a line by early post, saying he wanted me to read a book he had reviewed."

Elva was not yet shy about Mr. Fenner. She did not know her own mind; but she did like thinking of all he had said. The

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rst time one is loved all the world looks righter, for Elva did not want Walter ıkister's love. She tried to believe that ıterview had never taken place, and that ; had only been a bad dream.

There were all the pleasant signs of appy well-being when they went back o the drawing-room: the paper, the retty tea-table, the open piano with ighted wax-candles; all little nothings in hemselves, but which had become a neessity to three of the inmates of Rushrook.

Amice went to the window, and pulling side the heavy curtains, said to Elva, who ollowed her:

"It is a lovely night, Elva. Do you ee the fog has cleared away?"

"Yes; and how beautiful the moon is."

"Don't say anything about it to them," whispered Amice; "but I shall go to old Mrs. Brown again to-night. At ten o'clock will be early enough."

"What nonsense! What, sit up again!"

"Yes; I like it. I am so strong it does not hurt me, and her daughter is almost done up."

"Do take some one."

Amice laughed.

"Why, it's not far from the Home Farm, and no one goes on that road you know. Mrs. Brown has a claim on us, being our shepherd's wife."

Elva said no more. She knew from experience that nothing turned Amice away from her purpose when her mind was made up, and it was wiser to let her do as she liked.

At this moment the butler opened the door, and said, in a clear voice:

"Mr. Vicary, sir. He begs to know if you could give him a few minutes on particular business. He can wait."

Mr. Kestell put down the paper, and Elva came forward to the tea-table.

"Papa, you must have your tea first," she said.

"Why do people come in the evening?" said Mrs. Kestell. "I am sure Jesse Vicary could come to-morrow morning. Tell him so, Josiah."

"I dare say it's something about the Home Farm. Yes, Jones, tell him to wait. Show him into my study. There's a fire still there, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

And the imperturbable Jones retired as if all his movements were regulated by ingenious machinery.

"You had better have sent him away," said Mrs. Kestell. "If he's come about taking Symee to London, don't give in."

"If he insists I shall wash my hands of them both; but Symee is too wise a girl to be led away."

Amice had remained behind the curtain, gazing at the moonlit scene; but this remark seemed to draw her away from the beautiful view.

"Mamma, we could spare her, if it were to do her good, to be a comfort to her brother. We don't understand freedom, because we always have it; but it must be hard to be always at the beck and call of somebody, as Symee is, and no home to go to ever."

Amice spoke almost passionately.

"What nonsense you talk, Amice," said her mother, peevishly. "Compared with the lot of thousands of young women, Symee has indeed fallen on her legs. Your ridiculous notions about the poor will prevent your ever finding a husband. No gentleman would put up with such socialistic ideas."

"I was only trying to put myself in her place," said Amice, with a far-off look, and showing no annoyance.

Elva was handing the tea, and wishing to spare Amice further reproach, she said:

"It's no use quarrelling with people who keep all the commandments, mamma. You see they always get the best of us somewhere. As to Symee, it's trouble wasted, for she had the chance of going away, and, as papa says, she refused."

"It is difficult to know how to be free," said Amice. Then, afraid of her own boldness, she retired again behind the curtain, whilst Elva talked on to her father.

The beauty of that happy evening, however, had faded away, and no one exactly knew why. Mr. Kestell listened attentively to his wife as she began a long discourse about her sister in London; but he originated no more remarks, and seemed to be preoccupied. And when, tea being over, the bell was rung for Symee, he did not even ask his wife to stay longer, but he made her take his arm, and he himself helped her upstairs.

"Darling," he whispered, "this has been a great pleasure to me. Our long married life has been marred by nothing but your health, has it, dear?"

His eyes seemed to await the answer with intense anxiety.

"Of course not, Josiah; but that has

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been a great drawback to any pleasures one looked forward to."

"Yes, of course it has, dear," he sighed, and relapsed into silence till he remarked, on reaching the top of the stairs:

"We might have been poorer, but then you would have missed all your former comforts."

"But really, Josiah, we never have been poor. You speak as if you were going to be a bankrupt." Mrs. Kestell looked nervously at her husband.

"Oh no, no, dear, nothing of the kind. Even if it were possible in my affairs—which it is not—I have tied up your fortune so that it cannot be touched. I think I have foreseen everything, dearest."

Mrs. Kestell was reassured, and now remembered she was tired, though she added, as she entered the room:

"My father used to say that it was almost necessary for the fortune of business men's wives to be quite separate."

"But you would not mind sharing poverty with me, would you, dear?"

"Whatever good would that do you? Good-night. Ah, Symee! there you are. I should like the patent night-light this evening."

Mr. Kestell walked slowly out of the room. Once he turned back to see if his wife were looking after him. But no; she had gone at once to her table to examine night-lights, having a fad about their size and make.

He heaved a little sigh of disappointment; but there was not one word, or one thought of blame for her in his mind. He knew, by long experience, that you cannot expect sweet fruit from an ungrafted tree. His love, strong and deep as it had been, had never been able to graft anything upon the illustrious stock of Ovenden. On the contrary, the gentle, amiable girl had become a selfish woman. To watch deterioration in those we love gives far greater pain than to be conscious of our own backsliding; for the latter is always accompanied with the secret belief that we could change the state of things if we would, whilst in the other case our hands are often bound and tied, and we can but watch without being able to bring any help.

Now Mr. Kestell once again stood in his own hall and paused. He hung his head and gazed at the beautifully-tesselated pavement where Cupid was leading captive a train of Naiads, who danced on happily on their way to ruin, regardless of the Seasons who were encircled in the four corners of the hall, and carried each so many emblems that mistake as to their identity was impossible.

Mr. Kestell's eyes by accident rested on Cupid's face, which, being composed of small bits of marble, looked, if seen too close, somewhat as if he had the small-pox; moreover, Cupid's eyes were over large and leering, the artist having wished to express that the eyes are dangerous love-messengers. Had this Cupid come to life, he would have frightened away any coy, timid maidens; but he was, happily, still and lifeless, and the love and joy, the dancing and the mirth, remained ever the same, whatever might be the mood of the spectators in Mr. Kestell's much-admired hall.

Cupid's features were evidently not enlivening or soothing; for the master of Rushbrook House slowly raised his head and looked first at the drawing-room door, and then towards his study. His inclination evidently drew him towards the drawing-room, from which issued sounds of music. The two sisters were singing a duet; and this, even to a man who was not a fond father, would have been a musical treat. On the other hand, Mr. Kestell knew that Jesse Vicary was seated in his study, and had already been there some time, waiting for him.

He took a step forward, quite uncertain as to his decision, then slowly walked towards the drawing-room.

"He can wait," he murmured. "Why does he come at this time of night?" He went still quicker; his hand was on the handle of the door; Amice's rich contralto was enticing, and Elva's soprano harmonised exactly with her sister's notes. But though Mr. Kestell had got so far, he was suddenly seized with an overpowering impulse to change his mind. "I had better go and get it over," he said, this time to himself. He let go the handle so gently that no sound could be heard by the singers, and turned his back on the pleasant sounds.

At this moment Jones was coming across the hall, carrying a Bible, and met his master face to face.

"Ah, yes, Jones, I had forgotten. I suppose Vicary has not gone?"

"No, sir."

"Very well. Tell the young ladies there will be no prayers this evening, and that I am not to be disturbed again. If I

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am late I will let Vicary out. Don't let any one sit up."

"Yes, sir."

Then Jones and the Bible went back to where they came from, and Mr. Kestell walked boldly to the study door and opened it.

The fire had burnt low in the grate, and no candles had been lit, much to Mr. Kestell's surprise, but also to his secret relief; he opened the door upon a much darkened room, the occasional flicker showing, however, that a manly form was there, standing with folded arms by a chair near the fire.

"My dear Vicary, what! no light! Really, what can Jones have been thinking of? I must apologise for this very bad reception."

Mr. Kestell seized the poker, and at once a bright flame shot upwards, showing the earnest and very anxious face of Jesse Vicary.

"It was my fault, sir," he said, very quietly. "I told your butler I preferred being in the dark till you came."

"Well, I am glad it was your choice, for Rushbrook prides itself on its hospitality. Do me the kindness to light the candle, Vicary. Thank you. Now take a comfortable chair, and let me hear all you want to say. No one will disturb us."

"Thank you, sir," said Jesse, unfolding his arms and moving a heavy, straight-backed and leather-covered chair near to him, whilst Mr. Kestell walked to his arm-chair in front of his imposing knee-hold table, and sat down, folding his hands and looking towards his visitor with an expression of kind attention to what he might have to say.

"I really must apologise again, Vicary, for my apparent rudeness; but this evening my wife was downstairs, and such an unusual event made it impossible for me to come sooner."

"I had no right to come so late," said Jesse, rather dreamily. "I ought to apologise; not you, sir. I ought to have waited, perhaps; but the truth is, sir, I could not go to bed till—till I had seen you."

"Really? Don't distress yourself about that. I am quite at leisure now. Indeed, I shall enjoy a chat. I am afraid that you are bearing me a little grudge about our former interview. Poor Symee was much distressed when she came in."

"No, sir; I don't think 'grudge' was the word. You have a right to your opinion, and I did turn it over many times in my mind to see if I was wrong; but I couldn't see it in your light. I hope I am not obstinate; but a man must learn to choose sooner or later in his life, and I thought that that time had come for me. I hoped Symee would see it in that light, too, sir; but she has never had to choose before, and she is easily influenced by those about her. I was angry about it to-day; but since then I have considered more deeply, and I see that, perhaps, it's natural, and that, as you have been very kind to her, she has the right to say what she prefers."

Jesse paused. Mr. Kestell wondered if this were all the young man had come to say. He gave a little sigh of relief, and, taking up a paper-cutter, his face assumed a look of real and very genuine kindness. Jesse saw it, for he was looking straight at him.

"I hope I am fair in my judgement, Vicary. My legal life has, perhaps, taught me to strike the balance evenly and justly between two sides. Perhaps I, too, was rather warm on the subject to-day; but though I may be mistaken, I still adhere to my opinion. However, I must not part from you to-night knowing you are thinking hardly of me. You have claimed your right of choice. Well, though I am sorry, naturally, but perhaps not quite fairly, to give up all control of your future, yet I must grant you the privilege of choice. Some day, my dear Vicary, you will look back with regret to the time when you had no free choice. But I know these sentiments, when offered from experience to inexperience, are seldom welcome, so I will spare you."

A very genial smile parted the lips of Mr. Kestell; it seemed to radiate over every feature of his face. But this graciousness, which at another time would quite have won over Jesse, now seemed almost powerless to affect him. A deeper thought filled his mind.

"Thank you, sir, I must accept my freedom; not because I'm not deeply grateful for your past kindness, but because I feel I must be a man now; life seems so often to offer difficulties which there is nothing for it but to solve oneself, unhelped by others; a man and his better or worse nature have to struggle and conquer, or be conquered."

"You take too strong a view of youthful temptations, my dear Vicary. If I

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were not thoroughly well informed about your excellent conduct, you would make me believe in all kinds of black deeds. I do not think your sins have a very powerful voice. If you do not proclaim them from a housetop, they will, I am sure, hardly be heard."

The half-jocose tone of the old man did not harmonise with the tumultuous feelings in Jesse's mind.

"I came here to-night about a matter of much more concern to me, sir, than what I shall do with my future. It has all come over me this afternoon, and I feel there is no one but you who can set me at rest about it. If it seems a trifle to you, it is almost more than life to me."

Jesse could not sit still; he rose up and stood by the fire-place; and Mr. Kestell noticed that this question, whatever it might be, was really important to the young man. For a moment—and Jesse did not see it, as hardly knowing how to bring forward his subject, he turned towards the fire—Mr. Kestell's face relaxed, a haggard expression came over his features, his hand trembled visibly, so that he put down the paper-cutter, and, clenching his right hand, he put it down firmly on the table. There was in his look an unspoken expression of weariness, as of one ready to give up the struggle. If this feeling had come over him, he must have mastered it in a few moments, for when Jesse turned round again, the same half-smile played on the lips of Mr. Kestell of Greystone.

"Well, Jesse, speak out; what is it? We are alone. You had better say all that is in your mind."

"Forgive me, sir, if I cannot express what I feel clearly; it is none the less important to my happiness—yes, to the happiness of my whole life."

"Then it is a very serious question?"

"Yes, and you alone can take away the burden of it. Tell me, Mr. Kestell, now that you have granted me my freedom—tell me what a free man has a right to know—give me an outline of my early history. Who were my parents—and—and——"

Jesse paused; even now he dared not put the question plainly.

"My dear fellow, is that what is weighing on your mind? Why, of course, the curiosity is natural; but I really thought I had satisfied it long ago, and had told you the outline. Your mother and grandmother rented one of my cottages a month or two before you were born. The poor young thing died two days after the birth of her twins, and the old woman a month or six weeks—I forget the exact date—after that. I promised them—certainly the mother—that I would befriend her children; and, really, to the best of my ability, I have kept my word. I think you will grant this to me in spite of our little difference of opinion."

"My mother's name was Vicary, my grandmother was also called Vicary; then, was the connection between them that of mother and daughter-in-law? You see my meaning, sir? I have been talking to old Mrs. Joyce, who has lately come to live with her son's wife. She remembered my birth."

Mr. Kestell cleared his throat.

"Has she come home? I did not know that. I should certainly have gone to enquire after her. Yes, of course, that cottage belongs to the Joyces—a squatter family. I should, if I could have my way, buy up all those squatters; they lower the value of the surrounding land."

"But, sir, tell me what you know. I would rather hear the truth. I must have an answer. I think what has upheld me all my life—through many troubles which a fatherless lad alone can understand—is, knowing that, though my parents were poor, I was the son of an honest couple; that I could hold up my head, because poverty is no crime, and that the best inheritance a lad can have is an honest name. Was my father old Mrs. Vicary's son?"

There was a conscious pause; conscious, that is, to both of them. Mr. Kestell was visibly agitated, and Jesse saw that he was. His clenched hand on the table could not prevent that agitation which was taking place in his mind from being noticeable. Jesse thought he knew the cause, namely, unwillingness to tell bad news; but as a man falling from a great height grasps at any support, however powerless to uphold him, he, Jesse, hung on the answer to the question he had asked, and his heart almost stopped beating, though he fancied he heard the sound of the monosyllable before it issued from Mr. Kestell's lips.

"No."

Mr. Kestell's voice was very low.

"Was my father's name Vicary? Was he a cousin, or——"

"No;" repeated Mr. Kestell, in the same low tone.

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"Have I the right only to bear my mother's maiden name?"

Jesse put the last question in desperation. He felt he knew the worst already, but he was impelled to ask for the fullest confirmation of it. This time there was a longer pause than before. Mr. Kestell rose from his seat and came towards the fire-place, where Jesse was standing with folded arms, seeming to gather some kind of strength from this attitude, and to be bracing himself to hear the worst. Whatever was the reason which made the old man wish for time before answering, Jesse never considered. The answer was so important to him that he found no difficulty in believing that it ought to be well weighed before it was given.

Previously, on the same day, he had fancied Mr. Kestell was hard and self-opinionated in reference to his future; but now, when his benefactor put his hand on his arm with a gentle, sympathetic movement, the younger man experienced a revulsion of feeling. When we are abased in our own eyes, the expression of sympathy from a fellow-creature is tenfold more precious to us. It is like healing-balm on an open wound, like ice on a burning forehead.

"My dear Jesse, don't ask me; don't take this to heart. I would rather not be the—the one to answer you. I assure you, it is of no consequence; let us talk of other things."

"Thank you," said Jesse, hoarsely, though he knew not for what he was thanking Mr. Kestell, save for that gentle touch of sympathy. Now he knew the worst, nothing else mattered.

"Now about this offer. Thinking everything over again, I am sure I was wrong to speak as strongly as I did. I—I was perhaps too hasty. I was thinking of Symee, our own grief at parting from her; and really, as I said, all things considered, I dare say with your energy and cleverness—you are certainly clever—you might make it a success. I don't say I fully believe it, but if there is a chance of success, I ought not to stand in your way."

Mr. Kestell spoke so hurriedly, and was evidently so much moved that he hardly seemed able to speak with his usual clearness and conciseness; but Jesse Vicary was far too much occupied with his own thoughts to heed these signs.

"Thank you; there is no hurry about my decision. I must go now, sir. I—I—in fact, I don't feel able to see everything clearly yet. Good-night, and thank you for all your sympathy."

Jesse held out his hand, and, hiding a momentary hesitation, Mr. Kestell took it, and shook it warmly.

"Not a word more of thanks. Vicary, I think you may rely on my help about this situation; but take my advice—leave Symee here till you see how you manage; then, after a time, we might do something for you both. Symee must have a little outfit and some furniture—a little kind of wedding feast, eh? Take a cheerful view of the future, and all will come right."

"Thank you," said Jesse again; this time quite mechanically.

The future was nothing to him at this moment; all the golden light had faded out of it. He went towards the door and stood on the threshold, holding it open with one hand. It would have touched most hearts to see the alteration in the strong young man's bearing. This morning he had been so powerful in his own strength; now he seemed utterly subdued and a mere shadow of the former Jesse Vicary.

Standing so, and saying not a word, seemed strange, indeed. Mr. Kestell, who still faced him, appeared to think so, for he repeated again:

"All will come right, Vicary; all will come right."

Jesse shook his head.

"'That' can never come right;" and then, without waiting for another word, he crossed the hall and went out.

Left alone, Mr. Kestell did not go back to his writing-table, but sank down into a large arm-chair opposite the seat Jesse had lately left. Mr. Kestell looked fixedly at the empty chair, as if Jesse were still in it, and so remained for some time.

"I spoke the truth," he said at last, after that long silence; "I spoke the truth; another but he would not have taken it to heart. He would not hear me out—no. I forget; I did not tell him. It was impossible, quite impossible. I have expected this a long time. Good Heaven, how hot the room is!"

He rose and went to a side window, which he threw open. The night air blew freshly in, and seemed to restore him partially to himself.

"Yes, yes; he had better go to Mr. Fenner's office; and work will be the best remedy; it will make him forget. But my wife cannot spare Symee, and

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she must be thought of first; yes, first. Ah!——"

He breathed a deep sigh, and then very deliberately he returned to his desk and began writing a letter to Hoel Fenner, though he knew it could not go till the next day.

HISTORICAL PARALLELISMS.

It was on a bitterly cold November day that Bailly, the astronomer, and first Mayor of Paris, was conveyed—a victim to Jacobin fury—to the guillotine. The "sleety drizzle" and keen air chilled the failing blood of the poor old man.

"Bailly, thou tremblest!" said one of his persecutors.

"Mon ami, c'est de froid," replied Bailly.

To a similar sneer a similar answer was given by the Earl of Stafford, who was beheaded as a traitor, chiefly on fictitious evidence furnished by the infamous Titus Oates, on the twenty-ninth of December, 1680. And it is on record that Charles the First, on the morning of his execution, put on a couple of shirts, because, he said, if he trembled with cold, his enemies would attribute it to fear, and he was loth to incur such a reproach. So, in Otway's "Venice Preserved," Spinoso says to Renault:

"You are trembling, sir."

And Renault replies:

"'Tis a cold night, indeed, and I am aged."

In Byron's "Marino Faliero," the incident is repeated:

One of the Ten. Thou tremblest, Faliero.
The Doge. 'Tis with age, then.

Everybody knows the story which Livy tells of Tarquinius Superbus and his son: how that the latter sent to his father for advice as to the policy he should pursue in the town of Gabi, of which he had gained possession. The old King led the messenger into his garden, and having, with his stick, cut off the heads of the tallest poppies that grew there, bade him return and make known what he had seen to the young Prince, who immediately ordered the execution of the principal citizens of Gabi. We find parallels to this story in Herodotus, who wrote four centuries earlier than Livy; and also in the Chronicle of the Monk of Saint Gall, who wrote eight centuries later.

"Periander, tyrant of Corinth," says Herodotus, "and one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece—died B.C. 563—enquired of Thrasybulus, ruler of Miletus, what form of government would best secure him a tranquil reign. Thrasybulus conducted the envoy into the cornfields, when he plied him with questions on his journey from Corinth. Meanwhile, he struck down all the corn-stalks which were taller than the others, and threw them on the ground. Then he sent back Periander's messenger without any other answer. No sooner did he arrive at Corinth than Periander made haste to ascertain from him what counsels of wisdom the ruler of Miletus had furnished him. But the messenger, greatly discomfited, replied that he had given him none, and that he was surprised he should have sent him to a man who was so foolish as to waste his own property. And he related what he had seen him do. Periander, interpreting the significance of the action, and persuaded that Thrasybulus advised him to put to death the most prominent citizens, thenceforward inflicted every kind of cruelty upon his subjects. He exiled or slew all whom his father Cypesolus had spared, and thus finished the work which he had begun."

"Some of the chief men among the French," writes the Monk of Saint Gall, "had plotted to seize the Emperor Charles the Great; but he had learned their design. Recoiling from the thought of destroying those men who, if they had been amicable, could have rendered such great assistance to the Christians, he sent messengers to Pepin, the Hunchback—his natural son, whom he had shut up in a convent—to ask him how he should behave towards the guilty. The deputies found Pepin in the convent garden, along with the most venerable monks, engaged — while the younger were employed in the hardest forms of labour—in weeding out with a hoe the different nettles and noxious plants that the useful might grow with greater vigour. They explained to him the motive of their coming; but he, sighing and breathing heavily, after the manner of the ailing, who are always more peevish than persons in good health, replied:

"'If Charles attached the least value to my opinion, he would not immure me here to be so unworthily treated. I ask nothing from him; however, tell him only what you have found me doing.'

"But the messengers, fearing to return to the formidable Emperor without a

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positive answer, implored Pepin again and again to tell them what they should carry back to their master. The monk answered, angrily:

"'I have no information to give him, except as to what I do. I sweep away the refuse in order that the wholesome vegetables may thrive more freely.'

"The deputies then withdrew quite sadly, and like men who carried with them no reasonable reply. On entering the Emperor's presence, he interrogated them upon the outcome of their mission. They complained of being weary with so long a journey, and of having undergone so much trouble without being able to bring him a final answer. The monarch, full of sagacity, questioned them closely as to where they had found Pepin, what he was doing, and what he had said to them.

"'We saw him,' they replied, 'seated on a rustic stool, weeding with a hoe a bed of vegetables. Having explained the object of our journey, we could draw from him, after repeated pressure, only these words: "I have no information to give him except as to what I do—I sweep away the refuse in order that wholesome vegetables may thrive more freely."'

"At these words the Emperor, who wanted not for shrewdness, and was full of wisdom, said, rubbing his ears and dilating his nostrils:

"'Faithful vassals, you bring me back an answer full of meaning.'

"While all the conspirators trembled for their lives, the Emperor, passing from threat to fulfilment, swept them away; and, to extend and confirm his power, gratified his faithful subjects with the lands previously occupied by men useless to his service."

Julius Cæsar, when landing on the coast of Africa, stumbled as he leapt from his boat, and fell. To disabuse the minds of his soldiers of the superstitious impression the accident might otherwise have produced, he immediately exclaimed: "Thus, land of Africa, I take possession of thee!" Words almost exactly similar have been put by the chroniclers into the mouth of two of our mediæval heroes.

When William the Conqueror, disembarking in the Bay of Pevensey, descended from his great galley, the "Mora," he missed his footing, and fell forward with both hands upon the ground. Immediately his soldiers sent up a despairing cry of "God help us! God preserve us! This is a fatal sign." But William, with his usual presence of mind, exclaimed, as he sprung to his feet: "Par la resplendar Dé! By the splendour of God, what ails you? I have taken seisin of this land with my two hands, and so much as there is of it shall be yours." The ready reply greatly cheered his soldiers, one of whom, rushing forward, plucked some thatch from a cottage roof, and placed it in the Duke's hands as seisin of England and all within its borders. "I accept it," said William, "and may God be with us!"

Je l'otrei,
E Dix i seit ensemle vel mei.

In 1346, Edward the Third, landing at Sainte Vaste, on the coast of Normandy, to undertake the campaign which culminated in the great victory of Cressy, drew from a similar accident an equally prosperous augury. "When the fleet of the King of England," says Froissart, "took ground in the Bay of La Hogue, and was all anchored on the sands, the said King sprang from his ship, and as he put his foot to earth, fell so rudely that the blood flowed from his nose. Then his knights, who were close at hand, surrounded him, and said: 'Dear sir, return to your ship, and do not land yet awhile, for this is a bad sign for you.' Whereupon the King immediately replied: 'Nay, but it is a very good sign, for the earth desires me.' At this answer all were rejoiced."

The heroic story of Zopyra who, to help Darius to gain possession of Babylon, after a protracted siege, cut off his nose, ears, and lips, and presenting himself to the Babylonians as one who had been thus cruelly mutilated by his Sovereign's orders, contrived to gain their confidence, and then betrayed their city to the Persians, is one of our boyhood's old familiar favourites. In the eleventh century a similar act of devoted loyalty, on the part of a certain Aleasca, threw the pretender Leo into the hands of the Emperor, Alexis Comnenus, as his daughter, Anna Comnena, records in her panegyrical history of his reign, "The Alexiad."

According to a somewhat dubious tradition, the Greek dramatist, Sophocles, at the age of ninety, was accused of imbecility by his son Jophon. He rebutted the calumny by reciting before his judges, the Phratores, the magnificent passage in his tragedy of Œdipus Coloneus, which describes the arrival of Œdipus in the sacred forest of Colonna. Having thus vindicated his

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genius, he retired amid applause. In the seventeenth century, says Lelanne, the Abbé Cotin, having sold his property in return for a life-annuity, was denounced by his relatives as out of his mind. In self-defence, the Abbé invited the commissioners de lunatico inquirendo to come and hear him preach. They went, they listened, and decided in his favour.

That is a pretty anecdote of Apelles, who, visiting Protogenes at Rome, and finding him "not at home," left, instead of a visiting-card, a tiny sketch dashed off on a bit of canvas. In like manner, Frank Flores, the Dutch painter, having journeyed to Leyden to make the acquaintance of the painter Aartgen who chanced to be absent, seized a lump of charcoal, and drew on the wall a figure of Saint Luke. On his return, Aartgen declared that no one but Flores could have been the author of such a design, and immediately started for Antwerp to repay the visit. A similar incident crops up in the lives of other artists, while poets have jotted down stanzas in "The Visitors' Book."

We know that Spartacus, the hero of the great Servile War against Rome—you may read all about him in the judicial pages of Mommsen—before beginning the desperate battle near Rhegium, B.C. 71, in which he perished, killed his horse in the view of his whole army, saying that, if he conquered, he should not fail to find another, and that, if he were defeated, he should not need one. This action has several times been paralleled. As for example:

In the sanguinary wars of the Turks in Hungary, Count Ludovic Lodrom, on the eve of a battle, harangued his soldiers in the true martial strain. "That is all very well," said a German veteran, stepping out in front of the ranks. "That is all very well for you who are mounted on a swift horse, and are already thinking of saving yourself. But for us——" Whereupon Ludovic immediately dismounted, drew his sword, and hamstringed the animal. Then he exclaimed: "To-day, then, comrades, you shall see me as Captain and soldier fighting on foot by your side, and on the same terms." He was so severely wounded in the fight, that the Turks, who took him prisoner, put him to death, and sent his head to Constantinople, believing his recovery impossible, and that they could never carry him there alive.

When the fortunes of the White Rose wavered on the bloody field of Towton, the Earl of Warwick, the King-Maker, in order to kindle the enthusiasm of his soldiers, dismounted from his favourite charger, and stabbed it in the presence of the contending armies. Then, drawing his sword, he kissed the cross at the handle, and said to his men: "Whoever chooses to return home may do so, for I shall live or die this day with such as may like to remain with me!" This striking episode is described with great spirit by Lord Lytton in his romance of the "Last of the Barons."

Theophanes tells us that the Persians so greatly feared Narses, that they made use of his name as a bugbear to their children. According to Joinville, our Richard the Lion-heart did such brave deeds in the Holy Land, and the Saracens held him in such dread, that the women, when their children cried, would say to them: "Hush, hush, here is King Richard!" And if the horse of an Arab or a Saracen started at a bush, his rider would exclaim: "Dost thou think it is King Richard?" In like manner the mothers of France would silence their little ones with the name of Marlborough—the ever-victorious "Marlbrook." And, some seventy years before, the name of the Imperialist General, Johann von Worth—who commanded the Imperial cavalry in the invasion of France in 1636, and inspired universal alarm by his rapid marches—was used "pour épouvanter les enfants."

How often, I wonder, have moralists and essayists lugged in, as "an apposite illustration," the fable of Columbus and his egg? But this egg-story is also told—and perhaps with greater truth — of Brunelleschi, the great architect, who crowned the Duomo at Florence with its glorious cupola. When his envious rivals protested that the work was simplicity itself, he put them to silence by showing them how an egg could be made to stand upright. After all, the lesson which the anecdote conveys is just the same as that which Tennyson embodies in the well-known lines:

> Most can raise the flowers now,
> For all have got the seed.

When the Emperor Charles the Fifth traversed France, in 1540, on his way into the Low Countries, and thus put himself in the power of his enemy, Francis the First, the jester, or Court fool, of the latter, entered the Emperor's name provisionally in his "Calendar of Fools," replacing it by

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that of his own Sovereign, when he permitted the Emperor to accomplish his journey in safety. But Charles had probably studied the character of Francis before he undertook what seemed so rash a proceeding, and knew that his generous feelings would be touched by so direct an appeal to his honour. Brantome, in his "Vie du Marquis de Pescara" — the greatest of the Colonas — tells a very similar anecdote, however, of the jester of Alphonso the Fifth, "the Magnanimous," King of Aragon, Naples, and Sicily: "This great King Alphonso kept at his court a buffoon, who wrote in his tablets all the foolish things which he and his courtiers perpetrated every day or every week. It happened that one day the King wished to see his tablets, when he found his own name inscribed first of all for having given a thousand crowns to a man to purchase him some barbs in Barbary. 'Why have you put me here?' cried the King. 'What folly was there in that?' The jester answered: 'In trusting such a man, who hath no faith in him; he will carry off thy money, and will return no more.' Then said the King: 'But if he should return, what will you say then?' 'If he returns, I will strike thy name out of my tablets, and insert his, for being such a fool and blockhead as to come back, when he might have run away with all thy fine ducats.'"

In his "Quentin Durward," Scott makes Louis the Eleventh's jester include his Royal master among the fools for trusting himself in the power of William de la Marck, "the Wild Boar of Ardennes," and substitutes the Wild Boar when the latter allows Louis to leave in safety.

There is a touchingly beautiful story told of Maurice de Sully, afterwards Bishop of Paris, to the effect that shortly after he had been appointed Canon and Archdeacon, an old woman, clothed in drugget, with a white staff in her hand, entered the city, and enquired of any one whom she met where she might find her son, Doctor Maurice. Some ladies, fearing that the new dignitary might feel humiliated if he fell in with his mother so shabbily dressed, attired her in rich habiliments, threw a costly mantle over her, and then conducted her to his residence. But the Archdeacon refused to recognise her in those borrowed plumes. "My mother," said he, "is a poor woman who never wears anything better than a gown of drugget." They were obliged to take her away and restore her original clothes; after which they returned to the house of Doctor Maurice, who, at the time, was the centre of a brilliant assembly. The moment he caught sight of her, he advanced with the greatest reverence, and embraced her, saying: "This is indeed my mother." But precisely the same story is told of Pope Sixtus the Fifth and his sister Camilla, whom the cardinals had caused to be decked out in magnificent array, to be presented to the new Pope after his exaltation.

The reader will probably be acquainted with the romance that has the Lady of Fayal for its heroine. It was her misfortune to inspire the Troubadour-Knight, Raoul Sire de Coucy, with an ungovernable passion, so that, when she was preparing to accompany her husband to the Holy Land, he took the Cross in order to follow her. Whereupon, the Lord of Fayal, who was not ignorant of Raoul's devotion or of his wife's sense of it, strictly forbade her departure. The Sire de Coucy distinguished himself by his valour at Askalon and Cæsarea; but, having been dangerously wounded, resolved to return home and bid farewell to the lady of his unhappy love. He died on the way, however, with his last breath charging his Squire to embalm his heart and carry it to his mistress. The jealous Lord of Fayal intercepted the Squire, seized the precious burden, and caused it to be served up at his wife's table, who, when she was informed that she had eaten her lover's heart, broke her own, refused to partake of food, and died of despair.

The Italians have a similar legend in reference to a Prince of Salerno; and the Spaniards tell it of a Marquis of Astorgas. As told of the Lady of Fayal, it is repeated with some variations, in one of James Howel's "Familiar Letters," who recommends it to Ben Jonson as a subject for his muse. "In my opinion," he says, "which vails to yours, this is choice and rich stuff for you to put upon your loom and make a curious web of." It is introduced with considerable amplitude, by the elder Disraeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature."

In the East, much reverence was paid to the beard, as emblematic of the dignity of manhood; and among the Arabs to this day, its size and fulness are regarded as marks of high character and trustworthiness. It is the object of an oath of great solemnity, and that on which blessings or shame are spoken of as rest-

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ing. An insult to it is regarded as the last outrage which an enemy can inflict. An old chronicler, after informing his readers that the Syrians considered it a signal opprobrium, not simply to cut off this honourable appendage, but even to pluck from its amplitude a solitary hair, relates an amusing anecdote of the time of the Crusaders: When Baldwin, Count of Edessa, had allowed his beard to grow, after the Oriental fashion, because he had taken for wife the daughter of a noble chief named Gabriel, an Armenian by birth but a Greek by faith, he desired, in an hour of great need, to squeeze out of his father-in-law, who was very wealthy, a sum of money. He told him, therefore, that he had been compelled to pledge his beard to his creditors as security for a considerable debt. Whereupon, Gabriel, filled with shame and astonishment, and wishful to save his daughter and his son-in-law from an eternal dishonour, gave the latter fifty thousand bezants, on the express condition that he would never again, under any circumstances, or whatsoever the extreme of privation to which he might be reduced, involve his beard in danger and discredit.

So, too, we read that the great Portuguese statesman, Albuquerque, the founder of Portuguese India, being one day, during his career in the East, in want of funds, obtained a considerable loan upon his beard—which descended, it is said, below his waist. We suspect that a present-day money-lender would hardly consider such an appendage to be marketable; yet the Roskolniki schismatics were of opinion that the Divine image in man resided in the beard!

THE OLD SEMAPHORE.

A COMPLETE STORY.

On the summit of a lofty ridge stood the old semaphore house—Semaphore Lodge, as it was now called—a tall, red-brick tower rather than a house, with a flat roof adorned with old-fashioned balustrades, instead of battlements, painted conspicuously white; an object visible for miles around. The house was lonely in itself, and yet it was not far distant from a picturesque and lively little town. But that was hidden in the valley, and you looked right over it from Semaphore Lodge, far away, from hill-top to hill-top, crowned with dark woods, or showing its bold, naked outline against the sky.

Few people remembered the original object of that tall brick tower, or could recall the time when the tall semaphore post stood on its summit, with its two gaunt arms which would sometimes be waving and circling all day long, transmitting messages between the Admiralty House in London and the fleet at Spithead—busy arms that set in motion whole fleets of great, bluff three-deckers, with their pyramids of white canvas gracefully filling to the breeze; that waved often for victories, or signalled, letter by letter, the names of the heroes who had perished in the fight.

In truth, few came that way to speculate at all about the matter, for the road was little frequented that led to the Beacon Hill. There had been a fire-beacon on the hill before the scientific days of semaphores, benightedly so considered; a beacon-fire that once must have flashed the news of the coming of the Armada, and raised the country far and near by the presage of its fiery glow. And if the road was little frequented by day it was still less so by night, for, after it passed the Beacon, it led on to Gallows Hill, and so on to Deadman's Wood, a neighbourhood that had an evil reputation from time immemorial.

The tenant of Semaphore Lodge, and its owner also, was a certain grim and grizzled warrior of Scotch descent, well known everywhere as Major Quain. The Quains were from Galloway, of real Gaelic descent; generations of them slept within sound of the roaring waves, in a half-deserted burial-ground within sight of the Mull of Galloway. His father, Commodore Quain, who as a middie had served under the gallant Nelson, and who boasted of a wound subsequently received at Acre, and had lost an arm at Navarino, had been glad, in the piping times of peace, to obtain the appointment of Inspector of Semaphores between London and Portsmouth. He had married a pretty Scotch lassie, and two children had been born to the pair at the old semaphore house, the Major, as he now is, and his sister Janet. And now, after many campaigns and much service in hot climates and cold, Major Quain had come back to end his days where he had begun them, and lived very contentedly at Semaphore Lodge with his sister Janet and his daughter Jessica. While her brother had been campaigning abroad, sister Janet had spent much of her time with relatives in

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Scotland, and thus she had acquired a cachet more thoroughly Scotch than the Major. With Jessica, who had been brought up by her aunt since her mother's death, an event of long ago, Scotland betrayed itself in a certain crispness of expression and a slight, hardly distinguishable burr by way of accent. In appearance Janet was hard-featured but kindly; but Jessica had the true Gaelic beauty, a complexion clear and transparent, abundant hair of golden hue, with a ruddy tinge among the yellow, and eyes that were blue, and clear, and sweet, and of wonderful lustre.

It was New Year's Eve, and the Major and his sister were seated comfortably by the fire that blazed brightly in the hall, awaiting the return of Jessica, who had been for some weeks on a visit to a certain cousin, the Rev. Theophilus Quain, minister of a Scotch church in the north of London, who had a large family of sons and daughters, Jessica's early playmates and comrades. The hall, in fact, formed the ground-floor of the semaphore tower, and was the Major's favourite sitting-room, adorned with trophies of war and the chase from many distant lands. The floor above formed the Major's sleeping-room. And in the tower he reigned supreme; while the rest of the house was the teritory of his daughter and Aunt Janet. For the Lodge had grown and expanded in course of years; here a parlour had been built, and there a set of sleeping-rooms, with kitchens and offices in the rear, all forming a group of buildings not unpicturesque in its irregular outlines. That the house was visited by all the winds that blew, which, on a rough night like the present, howled and wailed about the corner of the old tower, was an attractive feature of the place in the Major's opinion.

But the Major was restless this night. He looked at his watch once or twice, muttered that the lassie was late, and began to pace up and down the hall. Aunt Janet looked up from the book she was quietly reading. "You'll be thinking about our poor father the night," she suggested, in a sympathetic tone.

"Aye," replied the Major. "I think about him always; but on this night, of all others, I hear his voice in the wind: 'My son, lay me to rest. Oh, let me sleep with my fathers.'"

"But that's just no Christian-like," remonstrated Janet. "The poor man rests soundly enough wherever he may lie."

"Would I hear him like that if he did?" rejoined the Major. "Sometimes I hear his foot upon the stair. Oh, he cannot rest, nor can I till I have done my duty by him."

"Eh, but it's twenty years ago, twenty years to-night; what chance is there now, Donald?"

"It will be revealed," said the Major, solemnly, "in the Lord's good time."

They were talking about their father, the old Commodore, who, twenty years ago, had mysteriously disappeared from this very building. Janet was in Scotland then, but her brother, who had landed that very day with troops at Southampton, had hastened to his father's house, hoping to be in time to let in the new year with him after the good old Scotch fashion. It was past midnight when Captain Quain, as he was then, reached the old semaphore tower, which his father had bought when the electric telegraph had taken away his occupation, and the old line of semaphores had been abolished. The Captain arrived soon after midnight, and found the tower lighted up, and in the hall sundry preparations for visitors in the shape of glasses and bottles of whiskey, cakes of all kinds, and a round of beef on the side table. The Commodore's chair was by the fire, his long clay pipe in the hearth, but the man himself was no longer there. Captain Quain sat down to wait for his father, who, he thought, had probably gone to let in the new year with friends in the town, hearty old veteran as he was, with his seventy years all told, and yet as bright and erect as ever. But the Commodore never came back to his easy-chair by the fire. Nothing was ever heard of him from that moment. The irresistible conclusion was that he had met with foul play. It was known that he had had a considerable sum of money in the house, several thousand pounds, just paid in from a mortgage; for the Commodore had a strong mistrust of banks, and would invest in nothing but land. That, as he would say, had no legs to run away with. But no money was found, saving a few pounds in the old Commodore's desk.

Captain Quain had only one clue to the mysterious event, and that he had kept ever since religiously locked up in his

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own bosom. But, arriving by train from Southampton, on that fatal night, he had seen a man, with a boy of five or six years old, hurriedly take their places in one of the carriages for London. And the man's face he recognised, or thought he recognised, as that of a cousin, a nephew of the old Commodore, a reckless, desperate ne'er do well, who had been the plague of his more prudent relatives for some years. Certainly, years had elapsed since the Captain had seen his cousin; but he had a tenacious memory for faces, and could hardly have been deceived. And then, in looking over his father's papers, he found confirmation strong of his suspicion in the form of a letter to his father from this scapegrace nephew, of recent date, and begging for help in the shape of loan, or gift. He was married, said the letter, his wife and boy were starving. If his uncle would only give him what would take the three of them to Australia, that land of golden promise! Across this letter was scrawled in the old Commodore's writing, "Sent nephew Tom five shillings." What more probable than that nephew Tom had come to see his uncle; had brought the boy, hoping to excite his compassion; had come upon the old man, perhaps found him counting over his money. The temptation had proved irresistible to a desperate man, and then the body had been hidden, close at hand, perhaps, but where? Search as they might, the Captain and the police whom he had called in, not a trace could they find, not even the fragment of a garment, or a morsel of what might have been human remains.

As for the nephew, Tom Quain, he had never been heard of again; he had left his lodgings suddenly, having paid all he owed, but he and his had vanished completely from that very night.

Such were the memories called up this New Year's Eve, in the old semaphore tower; but they were speedily blown to the winds by the arrival of the daughter of the house. Yes, Jessica had come, laughing, chattering, protesting in a breath that nothing was so delightful as to be home again, and nothing so dismal as to leave her dear friends in London.

"And the young man!" said Sandy, grinning—the old and faithful domestic, who had met his young mistress at the station.

"Oh, get along with you, Sandy," cried Jessica, pushing him out of the hall, "go and pay the flyman, and get the luggage in, and don't stand chattering."

The Major had not heard Sandy's interpellation, but Aunt Janet had, and going with Jessica to help her to take her things off, she questioned the young lady thereupon.

"Oh, aunt!" said Jessica, sinking into a chair, and covering her blushing cheeks with her pretty hands. "He is my young man, my very own, my own dear Tom."

"Jessica!" cried Janet, all aghast, "and you have brought him here—to this house. Oh, what will your father say."

"That's what I am frightened about," replied Jessica. "But he would come—no, he is not here," seeing that her aunt, apprehending a disturbance with the Major, was flying to the door. "He is going to sleep at the 'Stag,' but he is coming here presently for 'first foot.' Oh, they have it all in Australia, just as we do here."

"My goodness!" was all that Aunt Janet could say, as she sank overpowered into an easy-chair.

When Jessica had recovered her composure, she remembered that she had a letter for Aunt Janet from her cousin and Jessica's late host, Theophilus Quain. And this letter was slightly apologetic to begin with. Perhaps the writer had been a little to blame in not noticing sooner how things were going. But then the young people were really made for one another. He had never seen anything more genuine and spontaneous than the affection that had sprung up between them. And the young man was unexceptionable. His father was one of the richest men in the colony, and foremost in all good works. Altogether, he thought Jessica one of the luckiest girls in the world, and he hoped that his good friend and cousin, Donald, would see the matter in its proper light.

"We must break it gently to your father, darling," said Aunt Janet, kissing her niece's fresh, rosy cheeks; and Jessica, feeling sure that everything was now in train for a happy settlement of the question, gave free rein to her tongue in a joyous account of how it had all begun, continued, and finally culminated on this very morning, when Tom had come to the conclusion that there would be no happiness for him in the world without her, and she had made a similar discovery.

After all, the Major was more reasonable than had been anticipated, and at the same time much less dense. At the first

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word of a young man, which or whom Aunt Janet introduced awkwardly enough, the Major looked searchingly into his daughter's face, and read her open secret there; and he frowned over Theophilus Quain's letter, and was very grave and sad for awhile. And then he went out to see what sort of a night it was, and Jessica stole after him and put her arms round his neck, and cried a little softly upon his shoulder; and they understood each other without more words.

The night had turned fine, the wind had sunk, and the stars shone out brightly; and from the valley below rose the soft chimes of bells that were getting ready to ring out the old year and ring in the new; and the moon had risen from behind the hill and cast the shadow of the tower across the lawn that was powdered white with rime.

"Look, Jessica!" cried her father, seizing her by the arm. "Do you not see the semaphore at work?" And he ran out towards the gate and looked up at the white balustrades of the old tower. But there was nothing to be seen.

"I have seen it before," gasped the Major; "the shadow of the semaphore whirling its arms briskly round; and then when I look at the tower there is nothing."

"It must be the trees," cried Jessica, "waving their arms. I can see nothing else."

"Strange, too," said the Major, to himself, "it is always the same signal. Three times the upper arm is waved to the right, three times the lower to the left, and then I see no more."

"Papa," cried Jessica, "there is somebody coming."

And there approached along the road, with brisk, martial tread, Jessica's "young man," no other than Tom MacEwen, of Burrawaggo and elsewhere, in Australia, a fine, manly fellow, to whom the Major at once took a liking. There was a little talk at the gate, and then, taking his guest by the arm, Major Quain led him into the hall and introduced him to sister Janet. Tom was at his ease among them at once.

"It is just like coming home," he said, as he drew his chair to the fire, with Jessie standing by the arm of it and looking tenderly down upon him.

The two elders nodded approvingly at each other, as much as to say "He will do;" but they put him under a rigorous process of heckling, nevertheless. To all this cross-examination Tom answered readily enough, but with something of an abstracted manner, his eyes wandering here and there in a half-awakened way, as if he were recalling some experience of a previous existence.

"I know this place," he cried at last. "I am sure I have been here before, or in some house exactly like it."

"I don't think there is a house exactly like this anywhere," cried Jessie, gaily. "It is like John o' Groat's—original of its kind."

"Yet I am sure I know it," said Tom. "I remember having bannocks out of a cupboard against that wall; but there is no cupboard, so I am the victim of a delusion."

"Aye, but there was a cupboard there once," said Janet, wonderingly, "only when the house was enlarged and a door made there, naturally, the cupboard had to move."

"And who might have given you the bannocks, then?" asked the Major, with the least shade of suspicion in his voice.

"Some kind old man," replied Tom, guilelessly, "an old man with a hook for an arm, I remember that."

The Major's face turned white. Janet looked uneasily at her brother. "What is the good of speering all these questions, Donald? We will have the Colonel and the other lads in presently, and we'll no be ready for them."

"But this is interesting, Aunt Janet," said Tom. "How nice it would be if it turned out that we were first acquaint in auld lang syne."

"Oh, we never were acquaint with any MacEwens," interrupted Janet.

"Hush, Janet!" said the Major, holding up his hand authoritatively. "Let the lad tell his story. And you think you remember the place, then?"

"It all comes back to me now," said Tom, leaning easily back in his chair, and throwing over an arm, so as to possess himself of a hand of Jessica's unseen by the others. "I think we must have been very poor in those days, for I remember a bitter cold journey. I was in knickers, too, and didn't the wind bite my legs! I must have been about six years old, and that would make it twenty years ago."

"Hark, there's a knock!" cried Aunt Janet, ruthlessly interrupting the narrative. "It will be the Colonel; and the

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whist table not ready! Jessica, bustle about, lass!"

But it was not the Colonel; it was only the ostler from the "Stag," with a telegram that had just arrived for Mr. MacEwen. Tom, twisting the despatch carelessly between his fingers, was about to continue his narrative.

"But, open your despatch, MacEwen," said Janet, reproachfully. "You should not neglect your business for whatever may happen."

Tom read his despatch carelessly, and then with awakened interest, and handed it over to Jessica, who clasped her hands and cried:

"Oh, I'm frightened!"

"It's nothing to be frightened at," said Tom, laughing. "It's only," he said, in an explanatory way, to the others, "that my dear old dad has arrived unexpectedly in London, and will come and join me at the 'Stag.' Well, I'll bring him up in the morning."

"Aye, to breakfast, do!" cried Janet, hospitably.

"He might be here before then," muttered the Major. "Go on with your story, Tom."

"It isn't much of a story, anyhow; but I remember, after the cold journey, a colder walk, and then suddenly bursting into light and warmth, and into the presence of a nice, kind old gentleman who gave me bannocks. Well, I don't remember much more. They talked and talked, and then we came out—my father and I—and walked about in front; and then father left me for a bit, and went in again, and I was frightened. And after that I don't remember much, but we got home somehow; and it seemed that after that there was no more trouble; for soon after we were in Australia, and there, you know, the governor has managed to raise his pile."

"Aye, there's the finger of Providence in it all," cried the Major, starting from his seat. Just then Sandy had thrown the doors wide open. Midnight had struck unnoticed in the Lodge, and the bells from the church towers far and near were ringing merry peals, now loud now faint, as the night breeze rose or fell. The two lovers engaged in their tender whispering sweet, heard nothing but their two selves. But Janet sprang to her feet, as she saw the deadly purpose that glittered in her brother's eyes.

"What is it you'd do, Donald?" she cried, holding out her hands, appealingly. "Man, think of the poor young things."

"Woman, I have him under the fingers of my hand," cried Donald Quain. "Do you not see it all? Has not the prattling of yon infant brought the father to his doom? Isn't it all plain as the handwriting on the wall? The midnight visit to the good, kind old man; the money laid to view; the grey hairs clotted with blood; aye, the blood that has cried out these twenty years!"

"Donald, Donald," cried Janet, wringing her hands. "Think of the poor young things."

A heavy footstep approached the doorway, and presently into the full light of the brilliantly illuminated hall, a figure came out of the darkness, and stood looking at the little group within, with set, white face. Tom sprang to his feet with a joyous cry:

"Father! And so you are first foot after all!"

The new comer waved his hand deprecatingly. "Friends," he cried, in husky tones, casting a haggard glance around, "I know not what strange influence has brought me here this night; but something tells me I must humble myself before you all, and make a full confession."

"Confess what you will, Thomas Quain," cried the Major, "but nothing shall save you from the avenger of blood."

"Donald!" said Thomas Quain, for he it was—the scapegrace nephew of long ago, now the rich and honoured MacEwen, lord of innumerable flocks; the chiefest man in a proud and wealthy colony—"Donald," he cried, "I am guilty of much, but not of that; there is no blood on these hands."

The Major shook his head incredulously. The other could hardly speak, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. Janet sprang forward and poured out for him a full glass of whiskey. He drank it at a draught, thanked her with a wan smile, and proceeded:

"Friends, it is just twenty years ago that I came to this house, not uninvited; for the good old Commodore had written to say that he would see me, and had sent me the money—just the bare sum, five shillings—to pay the journey. I was poor and desperate, and I brought my little son with me, thinking that he might plead for me better than with words. Your father was kind-hearted, Donald, and he said that he would help me to begin a new life

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far away from my old failures and temptations. He would give me a hundred pounds, anyhow, he said, then and there, and as much more as he found he could spare. And then he begged me to walk about outside for a little time, while he examined his books. I knew that he was going to his safe, or wherever he kept his money, and did not want me to see where it was. And I waited patiently in the cold for some time, till, at last getting impatient at the long delay, I opened the door and looked in. The Commodore's seat was empty. I called him softly at first and then more loudly. But there was no answer. And then I saw the glare of light in one corner of the room, which seemed to come from inside a closet. Then, opening the door, I found the floor of the closet raised like a trap-door, and a narrow staircase beneath, up which the light shone strongly. I called my uncle's name once more, but still there was no reply; and, full of misgivings, I descended the stairs, which opened into a little chamber cut out of the solid chalk; and there at a little table covered with money bags, his head resting upon his folded arms, sat my uncle. I moved him, shook him—in vain—he was dead!

"Friends, consider my position. My uncle's bounty was my last chance. His sudden death had snatched from me the money which he had promised me. I had nothing to show for it. All that he had would go to people who were not likely to take my word as to his intended gift, and nothing mattered to him now; and so I resolved to take what he probably would have given me, for the Commodore was always better than his word. I took a bag of gold containing two hundred pounds. I left the vault, and closed the trap-door, and hastened away, having escaped recognition from any quarter. Next day I was on board a clipper bound for Australia. How I fared there I need not say."

"If there be any truth in your story," cried Donald, "point out the way to this wonderful cave."

Thomas Quain went at once to a closet that occupied one of the corners by the fireplace, a part of the room which had not been disturbed in the alterations. After a little difficulty he found the secret spring that opened the trap-door, and there, sure enough, was revealed the narrow flight of stairs.

"I will go down, and alone," cried Donald, snatching up a lamp. He disappeared down the stairs. His light still shone brightly, showing that there was no mephitic gas to be dreaded, and presently the Major returned with a sad, solemn face. "He is there," said the Major, addressing Thomas the elder, "and, so far, you have spoken the truth. And his money is there, too; and there again I may believe you. What this book may be I don't know." He opened a little MS. volume, in binding that was still fresh and untarnished. It was the Admiralty private code of signals, with diagrams showing the various positions of the arms of the semaphore that expressed certain words.

"Father," said Jessica, leaning over the Major's shoulder, as he abstractedly turned the leaves of the book, "see, there is the signal you told me about—three beats to the right, and three to the left—signification—forgiveness."

The Major really believes to this day that such was the message the good old Commodore had telegraphed by his shadowy semaphore. Anyhow, it had a great influence in inclining his mind to consent to his daughter's marriage with the son of the former scapegrace. But before this took place a funeral car set out from the old semaphore tower, and after a long journey by road and rail it arrived one day at the burial-ground of Kirkmaiden, and there it was met by a handful of mourners, the Major, the Rev. Theophilus Quain, and the two MacEwens. Thus the body of the old Commodore was laid with the bones of his fathers, within hearing of the wild waves that beat against the Mull of Galloway. And Mr. and Mrs. Tom MacEwen are enjoying themselves in London, Paris, or Rome, and old MacEwen has gone back to his flocks and herds, and his almost boundless pastures. And the old tower is tranquil enough now; and the visionary semaphore no longer throws a shadow over the green sward.

REST AND UNREST.

We English are regarded by the rest of Europe as types of industry. Perhaps the Germans may be excepted from this broad mass of people who feign to admire us for our gift of application, but if so it is only because they think they themselves are entitled to the praise that

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tacitly or not, is rendered to us. They may be right; or they may be wrong. It is a question I am not eager to decide. No doubt it is good for the world that there are at least two nationalities who assume to be rivals in so admirable a particular.

And yet to me there are few phases of civilised life more eccentric than this untiring and ceaseless hum of bustle which is the outward and audible expression of the industry which we are taught to reverence.

To say that it is unnatural to divorce ourselves from tranquillity, as we certainly do, is to utter no very remarkable paradox. Of course, it is unnatural. But are there five human beings in every hundred at present existing in the world, so concerned about their conduct that they would care to live strictly according to what they believe to be the injunctions of Nature, rather than live as other men live, and as they also must live if they are to earn their daily bread? I fancy the number is under, instead of over, this five per cent.

From the very beginning, the turmoil of life, as we have made it, strikes upon our ears. It is not the singing of birds, the whisper of the winds, and the lullaby of the streams, that most of us hear when first we are conscious that we hear at all. After that sweet cordial for infant ears, a mother's voice, the rumble of wheels, the trampling of horses, the throb of machinery, or the cracking of whips, is perhaps the predominant sound. The monthly nurse, if she be mentioned at all in either of these categories, must certainly be put among the machinery of civilisation.

As it is in the beginning, so is it later on, and so it continues to be until it is time for these same sounds of the age to pipe us out of the world with a requiem that differs not a jot from the cheerful orchestra which welcomed us into it.

Of course, I do not imply that primitive man—in whatever century B.C. he may have lived—sat for ever with his hands in his lap. Nor do I infer that such a state of inertia would be admirable either for its subject or the interests of Nature. However felicitous the epoch in question, our curious ancestor is sure to have been confronted with certain needs, the satisfaction of which was imperative for his and his family's existence, and which he could satisfy only by bestirring himself. For even in the most golden of ages—if any age may really be said to have been an age of gold—kidlings and lamb, or beef-steaks, and the fruits of the earth, were never so disposed for man's service that he had but to say "come hither," and lo! his dinner was before him, with no greater exertion than an effort of will.

No. A certain measure of activity is wholly natural. The savage had to hunt for his supper; kill other savages to save himself from being killed; and fight his brethren in order to secure for himself the wife whom they also were eager to place upon their respective hearths as the jewel of their cave-establishments. By-and-by, no doubt, he beat his jewel—if indeed he did not win her affections at the outset with a hearty flogging. And this also may be accounted a virtue in him by those to whom any action is better than lethargy.

But there is a profound difference between this occasional activity of the savage and the methodical unresting activity of the average man of our day. His was brisk movement towards a goal, for the attainment of which he had to exercise his bodily faculties in a way that educated them with amazing celerity. Afterwards, he reposed absolutely. His repose was, perhaps, a little too much like the state of coma into which an anaconda lapses after a heavy meal. But, as he was not a very intellectual person, this cannot be said in his reproach. And some of us may envy him this hearty ability temporarily to sever himself at will from his surroundings.

With us, it is much otherwise. Machinery has no little to answer for as a clog of arrest of the developement of some of the best of our faculties. A century ago the average European was surely a man of more stalwart mind than his descendant of to-day. This falling off in one direction, commensurate with progress in another direction, is inevitable. The wealth of the nation is greater; the individual's sense of individuality and personal strength in strife with the world is less. It is a pity; but it is true. The aggregate of individuals is larger; but the individuals who compose this aggregate are themselves smaller than of yore.

It is with no intention of preferring an indictment of a capital kind against the inventors of modern machinery that I make this statement. He who runs may read the merits as well as the demerits of such inventions. But it is too much the fashion with those good, easy, conventional moralists, who have the ear of the public, to insist upon the merits and to disregard

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the defects. It were honester to consider the other side of the question; and it were also better for those of us who are interested in this rivalry of animated iron and steel, and who are unconscious of the mental decadence with which we are in consequence threatened. There are School Boards, it may be protested, to check this menace of degradation. But such education is really of an exotic kind, and does not make atonement in the right direction.

Which is the nobler kind of man: he who, for eight or nine hours a day, feeds the maw of a machine, that it may do the work which formerly came from human hands and the human intelligence; or, he who, far from the whirr of wheels and the screech of steam whistles, tends his own small flock, shears his sheep, milks his kine, makes his own bread, and butter, and vestments, cultivates his small but adequate patch of grain land, owns a boat and wrestles with the sea for its own treasures; who faces all the various moods of Nature, and grows stronger with every storm, and who, over and above these various exercises, builds his own house, keeps it in repair, and rears within its homely walls four or five offspring as sturdy and independent as himself?

Can there be any doubt as to the verdict?

The one man is an automaton. His wife, if he have a wife, is, in several essential particulars, a better man than he. Her work, unlike his, is of a kind that tests the abilities; and, through the test, enlarges them. He is but the subordinate of a machine. She is a responsible entity, who is taught by experience that her actions are of more moment than his. His work wearies, but does not teach him. She grows wiser and more capable every day.

On the other hand, the countryman who has to rely on his own efforts in divers departments for his material well-being, is as many times more a man than his rival as the sum total of his occupations is the multiple of one.

The slave of the machine, when he rests, does but take breath that he may subsequently the better perform the behests of his tyrannical master. But the countryman is never thus idle. He goes from his kine to his flocks, from his boat to his barns; and his every diverse employment is, at the same time, a repose and a developement.

Like every other abstraction of the kind, idleness is a term that admits of no exact definition. It has a significance relative to its object. Some people would not hesitate to charge a shepherd with idleness when they saw him prone on the green slope of a hill, his head in his hands. What a misapplication of the word! As if only he may be excused from the charge of being idle who runs to and fro unceasingly, or keeps his hands in constant motion! If a machine could speak—aided, of course, by its own intelligence exclusively—I dare say it would propound some such foolish definition as this.

The Judge on his bench, moreover, is another example of a man whose real condition is belied by appearances. He does not seem to be very wide awake. Perhaps he even nods his head like one about to fall asleep. It is nothing in objection to my argument if occasionally he does really slumber. And yet, when the moment of test arrives, he uprises, and proves sufficiently that his mind has followed with energy all that has been said in his presence.

But to recur to the shepherd. In many respects he is the type of a man who lives after the model of Nature. I am not going to say anything in praise of the idyllic shepherd, or to lament because all the thirty or forty million inhabitants of the British Isles cannot by some chance be transformed into piping Strephons and Chloes. That would be a terrible calamity. It would certainly involve the surrender of our pre-eminence at sea and in commerce; nor would it be fair compensation if the manufacturers of flutes and lyres found themselves fully employed, and mutton was, as it assuredly would be, ridiculously cheap.

No; the idyllic shepherd may be consigned to such oblivion as Theocritus and his imitators have left it possible for him to attain. He was a much more lazy fellow than his sturdy successors of our island in our day and other days. I should think the beasts of prey in Sicily and elsewhere never lacked the material for a meal when they were in the vicinity of a flock ruled by a man who divided his time between his sheep and his sweethearts, somewhat considerably in favour of the latter.

Contrast with this rogue the strong, thoughtful shepherds of the Highlands of Scotland. I have seen enough of these men, to admire, and even envy them. Who has so free a life in these days of the trammels of responsibility? Who so

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placid a life amid the babble of noise begotten for the rest of us by that prolific fiend called Steam? What King receives so cheerful and unquestioning allegiance from his subjects, as our shepherd from his happy sheep? He is ever in the open, and in the secrets of Nature like no other class of man. It is only when he visits the town that he is sensible of the difference between himself and his fellows. He is a brawny man, with the tread of a giant or a Greek god; but he is not at his ease in cities. Herein, however, his loss is really his gain; and he is usually acute enough to perceive it.

It is, also, in his opportunities for reflection, that the shepherd is a happy man. If, universally throughout the kingdom, our shepherds could for one Sunday exchange places with the clergy, I fancy we should hear some robust, original sermons. The sheep of the hills would fare less well. They, on the morrow, would doubtless welcome with enthusiasm the return of their dear lord and master.

There is a sympathetic coherence in the life of the shepherd which fails us who live after the promptings of civilisation, rather than of Nature. He has no need of what we call recreation. The majority of us work that we may be for a time idle; and are idle that we may, thereafter, be the more fit for work. It is a curious compromise between inclination and the claim set upon us by the habits of our age. The two conditions go hand-in-hand, like the cog and socket of a wheel. But the shepherd's work is at the same time an employment, an education, and a recreation.

It was hardly necessary for Louis Stevenson, the other day, to take up the gage on behalf of idleness as a condition occasionally both salutary and essential for most human beings. We must lie fallow now and then. "Go and throw stones into the sea for a week, and don't open a book all the time," is the sort of medical advice that is common enough nowadays, and as judicious as it is common.

But the activity implied, even in so easy a recipe as this, may be objectionable to some of us. These children of ultra-civilisation may be recommended to lie supine in a hammock slung between two trees in the tropics; or to sit motionless in the sun or the shade with their eyes fixed on a winsome range of country; or to lounge on the ferny, pine-capt knoll of an islet in a fair lake, with blue mountains round about the lake. Thus the days may be dreamed through. Even the very thoughts that lightly insinuate themselves into the mind during this season of suspended animation must not be encouraged. They will then withdraw and die away into the limbo of immature ideas.

This is a state of being truly appalling to contemplate. But it is by no means so appalling to its subject. It is an anticipation of the Nirvana of all good Buddhists. It may also be compared to the lethargy of the opium-eater. But, unlike the virtuous Buddhist and the vicious opium-eater, the votary of this modern method of recuperation is all the while conscious of the ability that he actually possesses to pull the string when he pleases, to transform himself once more into an active, struggling man, like other men, to grapple hard with the cares of life, and to enjoy its pleasures again, as of yore.

For my part, I love "dolce far niente" as I love few pleasures. A blank day is something to look forward to. Perhaps, however, there is more of speciousness and method in this love of what to the common eye seems consummate idleness than even I myself am free to confess to. For it is simple knowledge that the mind is braced by these seasons of inaction, as nothing else can brace it. Nor is the mind all the while so dead to the world as it feigns to be. It sleeps with an eye open. And when the ripe moment comes, it springs anew into strong existence like the giant of the proverb, refreshed with wine.

As we grow wiser and richer — it is to be hoped our progress in wealth and wisdom will be a parallel progress—it is probable that we shall come to view this need of perfect rest as seriously as, half a century ago, we cried for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Among the myriad other institutions which our benevolence and the complexity of our civilisation will ere long have raised in our midst, we shall then, it may be, include Houses of Rest for faded minds. Why should it not be so? We provide cabmen, who are already the proprietors of rainproof-cabs, with shelters; and dogs, who much prefer a life of unconstrained vagabondage, with luxurious asylums. Is not the nation's mind of more import than cabmen and discontented dogs? And truly it is no very great exaggeration to say that the national intellect is likely to be menaced with a sort of paralysis, or actual enfeeblement, by the

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pace it has to run, and the variety of contortions it has to suffer in its course.

For the rich there are already a multitude of resources akin to this remedy suggested for the national benefit. Hydropathic and other establishments do good work in their way, and a thousand watering places recreate their hundreds of thousands. But for the millions, whose purses sigh at the impossibility of more than a day's holiday, or more than two or three days' abstention from labour, what resource is there? Perhaps, when we have paid off our National Debt, it may occur to us to take this matter in hand. Worse schemes have been set before the public, and have been received with approbation.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.

He recoiled. The glitter, the malice of her eyes, and the malignant smile on her lips were indescribable.

"So you haven't learned your lesson yet?" she asked. "Did you think I would be such a fool as not to follow you? Did you think your locking the door would keep me back? You're a madman, Brend Aston! I would have kept your secret if you had listened to me this afternoon. But you defy me. And——" She made a slight gesture to the room behind her.

"You have told her?" his lips asked.

"Not yet. I was waiting to see if you came. If you go one step nearer her, if if you stay an hour longer under the same roof with her, I tell her everything. If you go away, or send her away, as I asked you this afternoon, you will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that she still believes in you. What she would think, if she knew she were married to a murderer, a——"

"You are a devil——"

"I am the image of your sin. I am ugly, hateful, vile in your eyes. So should your sin be. You would like it to remain hidden, unpunished. I will be its avenger then—a secret one; one that no one but yourself shall know of, if you will. If you defy me, and persist in this mad love of yours, your crime shall be known to her, and to all whose good opinion you care for. Hark! I hear her moving. Anthony Melvin has been here, and she has been crying. I told him to come. She loves him, and you knew it. It would serve you well if he and she had—— But she is good. I hated her once. I don't know if I don't hate her now. But she is far too pure and true for you. Your sin-stained life should not dare touch hers!"

He wondered why he did not take her by the throat and crush the breath out of her. But he was too afraid of her. His blood froze in his veins.

"Go away," said Jane. "She is coming. If you stay, I will tell her all before your face."

She stood between him and the room where Daisy was.

He waited one second longer, then turned and left the room.

She heard the hall-door shut as he went out again into the night.

A moment later Miss Ross came into the room. She was considerably amazed at finding Jane there. But Jane answered her questions so curtly, that Miss Ross, concluding she was in one of her bad tempers, prudently refrained from making any more enquiries as to when she returned, and what she had done in London. She felt really relieved, too, at seeing her back, having found it impossible quite to silence all the black suggestions that had troubled her mind. Jane went up to her room to take off her things. Then she sat down for a few moments to think. She had no mercy for Aston. That feeling had gone by. She scarcely even knew if she loved him any more. She was only certain of one thing, and that was, that he should not take Daisy away with him as his wife. She had not succeeded in preventing the marriage, though she had kept such a good watch on his movements. She had been certain that the moment was very near, and fearing that he would elude her at the last moment, had written that letter to Miss Ross the previous day, hoping that she would give the enclosed note to Aston directly he arrived in town. Some little action of his in the morning had excited her suspicion. She had kept a stealthy watch on his office, and had seen him leave it. She was sure that he was going up to town. She hurried off to the station as soon as she could leave the house, and found her suspicions confirmed by the

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station-master. She had lost that train; but there was another in an hour. She went up by that, going straight to the house where she had made the appointment with him. It was the house in which she had first made his acquaintance. She was sure that, if he had received the note, he would come. On her way to the house she had the daring thought of sending the telegram to Miss Ross. Aston did come, hoping to make terms with her. Her rage was great when she found that she was too late after all, and that Miss Ross had not delivered her note till the marriage was over. The interview that followed was a very stormy one. She would listen to nothing but that, from that hour, he should give up Daisy. As he refused, she tried to prevent him leaving the room. But he had struck her down, and, hurrying from the room, had locked her in, and taken the key with him. It would delay her pursuit for a little, and, in the meantime, he could take Daisy away. When she recovered consciousness she managed to make herself heard; and, getting out of the room, hurried straight down to Riverbridge, trusting that her telegram had succeeded, and that Daisy and Miss Ross would have acted on it, believing it came from Aston. She was certain that, if he found they had gone back, he would follow Daisy. She was determined to separate them at any cost. It was she who had written that letter to Anthony, urging him to delay his journey to Australia; and what evil thoughts entered her brain when she sent that other telegram to him as from Daisy, begging him to come down to Riverbridge that evening, no one but herself knew.

Happily the two she had tried to tempt had come out of the ordeal scathless. Perhaps even she was shamed, for a softer thought had come into her heart for Daisy. She was wondering how to act next. She had no intention of sparing Aston. She would expose him, if he dared defy her. If not—— Well, perhaps she had still some wild idea of taking a place in his life that no other woman might fill. Even to wait on him, watch over his comfort, see him, speak to him, would be something to the all-absorbing, exacting, jealous feeling with which she regarded him. Perhaps some wilder thought still, of the possibility of a coming day when he, finding that no other woman could come into his life, might turn to her who alone knew of, and would enter into, the secret thoughts of his life, made her so reluctant to strike the last blow. If she did, though she forced him apart from Daisy, she would drive him from herself too. He would cast her off, and, once his secret known, she would have no further power over him.

But she feared he would still try and see Daisy to-night and persuade her to go away with him. A sudden idea came to her. She stole out of her room and listened. The house was silent downstairs. Miss Ross and Daisy were in the drawing-room; the servant in the kitchen. It was growing late. A clock struck half-past ten. The swollen river was rushing past the house, with its gurgling, lapping noises. It was a dark night; the sky heavy with clouds, which would probably break into rain again before the morning.

Jane wondered why the servant had not come up to bed. She was a flighty girl, and, in consequence, did not have a very good time with the housekeeper. The maid, who had been engaged to wait on Daisy, had gone away for a fortnight's holiday. Jane mistrusted the servant, and a sudden thought that Aston might bribe her to get a word sent to Daisy, made her hurry down into the kitchen.

The servant—a pretty-looking girl—was considerably startled at seeing Jane walk in. She had no idea that she had arrived, and was very disgusted at being packed off ignominiously to bed. She took the water up to the bedrooms, lingering in Daisy's. Daisy, who was very tired, came into her room while she was there.

"Oh, if you please, miss," said the girl, hurriedly, and with an excited, mysterious manner, "I was to give you this, and not let any one see, leastways, Jane. It's my young man brought it, half an hour ago, and he wouldn't say where it come from. But it was partic'lar urgent; some one ill, I think. He said——"

She broke off abruptly, and pretended to be tidying the dressing-table. e thought she heard a slight sound on the landing outside.

"Good night, miss," she said, leaving the room. The end of a dress vanishing through the door that led from the front to the back of the house, confirmed her suspicions. "Nasty old cat!" she thought, "how she does creep about! It gives me quite a turn. What does it matter to her if Miss Garth has a sweetheart? She never had none herself, I'll be bound," with a

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simpering toss of her head as she disappeared into her own bedroom.

Daisy stood gazing at the note which the servant had put in her hand. It had no writing on it. It was not even addressed; but she knew who it had come from. What manner of man was this to whom she had bound herself for life? The hurried, secret marriage; his strange absence; now this mysterious note, sent through servants. Her whole soul revolted against the secrecy; the messengers employed; the mystery. And Jane was not to know! How was she — that hateful woman—mixed up with his—her own fate! Her womanly pride and delicacy were outraged by it all. It was some time before she was able to open the note.

It was, as she suspected, from Brend Aston—her husband. It began abruptly:

"What will you think of me? But, darling—my wife—you must believe me. There is no earthly barrier to separate us, though my conduct may have led you to think so. I must see you—yet I cannot come to you. I must throw myself on your mercy. If you will come to me, I will explain. Come to me to-night. I shall wait for you in the garden, on the other side of the mill-race, by the wooden bridge, at one o'clock, for then everybody will be asleep. Will you be afraid? My darling, I shall be there to protect you. If my happiness is anything to you, Daisy, come. Don't let any one know, any one see. I have an enemy in the house, who is yours also. But she can do us no harm if you will not allow it. If I do not see you to-night I—— But what am I saying? I am a coward. Only believe me, that if I have not you, I have nothing to live for."

Daisy thought she had conquered herself. But she had still a sharp, short struggle to go through before she could consent to the demand of that letter. It was short, because it was so sharp. It exhausted her physical strength. It was rather the submission of one who could resist no longer. She was his wife. Nothing could alter that. If he sent for her; if he were in trouble—no matter how it might blacken her own life—she must go. She sat there waiting till the time should come for her to go out into the garden. She put out her light for fear any one should know she was sitting up. She knew it was Jane he feared, and she knew how stealthily Jane crept about the house watching and spying. It was evident she had a hold over Brend Aston, and that he feared her. Daisy was too weary now to feel humiliation of the fact. She was only afraid of the woman, whose dark connection with Aston must touch her, too, now, as his wife.

How still the house was. What if those steps—— She was in such a state of excitement and nervous exhaustion that she felt that if those ghostly footsteps sounded on the stairs, she must lose all self-control and run out into the darkness and night, and never return again to the gloomy ghost-haunted house. A presentiment of coming evil weighed heavily on her. She was afraid of she knew not what.

It was nearly one. She opened her door and listened. Not a sound. As her eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, she stole out on to the landing. Some faint light fell through the window to the left, and she instinctively hurried past it, lest her figure should be even dimly outlined to any possible watcher from the opposite side of the staircase. She reached the top of the stairs, drawing the dark, hooded cloak, in which she had muffled herself, closer about her, then began to descend. Slowly, cautiously, her light feet falling softly, and yet, in spite of her care, making a faint sound which, in the dead silence of the night, was strangely like the echo of those grisly feet which marked the woe or doom of the owners of the house. Some such thought struck her, and she shivered, moving on more swiftly, a dark, slender shape, through that house of shadows.

Once downstairs, she was not so much afraid. There was less fear of awaking any one else in the house now. She ventured to light a candle, and making her way to the back of the house, unfastened the door that led out into the garden. She stood for a second on the threshold. The cold night-air blew sharply on her. The darkness of the garden, with the dreary noises of the swollen river, made her shrink back. But she was too much afraid to hesitate. At any moment that horrible woman, with her stealthy tread, might be upon her. It was almost more dreadful—the thought of being caught by her—than that of going to meet the figure awaiting her beyond the mill-race.

She shut the door gently and hurried on down the flagged path. What dreadful noises the river was making to-night! Oddly enough, the talk she had had with Aston, as they stood on the little wooden

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bridge and looked at the great water-wheel, came back to her. How long was that ago? It seemed years and years! and it was only a few short months. Then she was a happy, careless-hearted school-girl. To-day she was a woman—a wife—with her heart dead and cold within her. The mills loomed dark before her. She knew where the great water-wheel, still and silent now, stood black and slime-stained, waiting like some sullen, crouching creature in ambush for the coming day, when it would seize the waters once more, and churn and torture them into yellow foam and swirling eddies.

She saw, slenderly outlined, the little wooden bridge spanning the rushing water. But she felt an uncontrollable horror of it. She had a vague, superstitious terror that on it she might meet—what? Had not she fancied she had seen it once before—that misty, shadowy shape? The wraith of the dead girl who had gone down to her doom in those black, dreadful waters.

She hurried round the mills, feeling almost a wish to meet—— but, as suddenly a tall shape stepped out from the shadow of the mills and caught her to his breast and whispered a hundred incoherent, passionate words over her, and kissed her fiercely, despairingly, exultantly on her eyes and lips, she uttered a faint, sobbing cry, and thought that anything—ghost of betrayed girl; the stealthy tread of the hateful woman — anything would have been better to face than this!

It was some seconds before she could snatch herself from his embrace.

"So you came—Daisy! My darling! My little wife! I was afraid——" he caught her hands in his again. But she kept him from her, her very desperation and sense of helplessness giving her courage.

"I came, because you sent for me. But I have a right to ask you for an explanation——"

He dropped her hands and turned away for a second.

"You have a right," he said, in a heavy, hoarse voice; "and yet—Daisy! Is my love to count for nothing? Will not you trust to it, and let us take up the new life that opened for us this morning?"

But she did not yield to the passionate, humble pleading. He saw, in the darkness, how the slender figure drew itself up more proudly.

"Daisy! Take me for what I am now! Not for what I was!"

"If you can tell me that you have done nothing which, if I had known, would have prevented me becoming your wife, I will say yes. There is some mystery. It makes me afraid. Everything makes me afraid. Your conduct to-day; the strange things you have hinted at since you told me you cared for me. Those horrible feet that go up and down the stairs—that have come as far as my room; that hateful woman! I am afraid! Afraid! Tell me that you have done nothing to make me so! Tell me that I may honour you, give up my life to you, without dishonour, and I will do my best to be a good wife to you."

A momentary silence. Not a sound in all the garden, but the roaring, rushing waters.

"I have done nothing," he said, hoarsely.

"See!" she lifted her hand. The clouds were parting. Here and there a star looked down with steadfast shining. A faint light, where the moon was slowly unveiling itself, was breaking in the sky. "Look up at the stars! God put them there, to remind us of His Eternal Truth. Swear that what you say is true, and I will give myself to you."

"I swear it," he said, with white lips.

"It is a lie. He is a murderer!"

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 51.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1889. PRICE TWOPENCE.

KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

BY ESMÈ STUART.

Author of "Muriel's Marriage," "Joan Vellacot," "A Faire Damzell," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE OFFER REFUSED.

WHEN once out of the grounds, Jesse Vicary took the road by the Pools; it was the way to the Home Farm, so he took it by instinct, not by any conscious act of choice. The trees that bordered the water were black and mysterious-looking in the shadow, and the moonlight appeared in other places so brilliant as to cheat one into fancying it was daylight. Had it been pitch-dark it would have been all the same to Jesse; he saw nothing around him; only the overwhelming feeling surged up again and again, like the certain advance of cruel waves: "I have not even an honest name; not that which I care most about—oh, Heavens, not even that!" Soon he came to the turn to the Home Farm; he opened the gate, and went on up the lane, and past the fir plantation, where the moonlight did not reach. At the farthest end of the wood was a great heap of felled trees, close to the roadside. As a drunken man who can go no further, Jesse Vicary staggered towards these; he found that walking did not ease his pain, and he sank down on the hard logs and tried to be calmer. The pain of the shame seemed like hot irons on tender flesh; he felt branded with it. He had had no such trial before; so it seemed to him as he groaned out:

"Not even an honest name; and yet I would willingly resign everything for that. And Mr. Kestell has known it all along; and my proud wishes must have seemed ridiculous to him. What am I? Nothing—nothing, a scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. But that I myself should hear this, should find it out. Many would not care, but I do; and it is death to me. Can it be true? Let me see—did I put it plainly? Good Heavens, yes, only too plainly."

He laid his head on the cold, dewy trunks, and listened to the night wind sobbing above—sobbing, sobbing out his shame, he thought. Then his mind went back to Golden Sparrow Street, to all the poor and outcast there, to his friends whom he had so willingly served.

"But I did it from a higher pedestal," thought he, "and this is my punishment. I felt better, greater than they, when all the time many of them were far above me—aye, many of them had an honest name, of which they had no cause to be ashamed."

Then with the moan of the fir-trees something better seemed to be whispered to him. This trial was not of his own making, or of his own seeking.

He bent his head on his arms, which now rested on his knees; he wanted to shrink into nothing, if that were possible. The dew fell on his hair, and gathered about his garments; the nightjar notes sounded like a death-knell; a squirrel, disturbed from its sleep, ran up some branches of the fir near to him; but he took no notice. Nor did he remember that at the farm they went early to bed, and that they would wonder at his absence.

All at once he was roused, however; not by any of the sounds of Nature, which he knew too well to be surprised at, but by the softest tread on the fir-needle-covered path. He did not raise his head; he cared too little for any one to believe that he should

be noticed, or, if noticed, only treated as a curious wayfarer. Yes, it was a woman's step—light, and quick, and strong. Nearer and nearer came the steps; perhaps a lass returning from meeting her lover. It was best for both of them that he should appear unconscious of her presence, or asleep; but strange, the footsteps ceased when close beside him, and a strange thrill passed through Jesse's frame, when a hand was put upon his shoulder, and a voice which he knew said:

"Jesse Vicary, you are in trouble. Can I help you?"

It was Amice Kestell on her way to Mrs. Brown's cottage, where she was going to sit up with the invalid.

Jesse stood up now, ashamed of being found by her here—ashamed of the very reason that was crushing his spirit; but he was not going to tell her a lie. Was she not the embodiment of his heaven?

"Yes," he answered, "it's a sore trouble, Miss Kestell; but not one that can be helped by anybody."

She hardly looked like an ordinary human being as she stood half in shadow and half in moonlight; and to Jesse, who knew nothing of her errand, there came the idea that she was an angel who had taken the form of Amice Kestell.

"If no one can help you, take your trouble to—God. I know He will. At eventide there will be light. . . ."

Amice said this in a dreamy voice, and looked out from the gloom of the wood to the full moonlight beyond, as if to ask for confirmation of Nature.

Jesse did not answer. He was too much crushed to be easily raised up, and Amice added:

"I mustn't stay; they are expecting me at Mrs. Brown's. If you are on your way to the farm, will you carry this basket for me as far as the shepherd's cottage? Symee will be so glad to hear about your doing this for me, to-morrow, when I get home."

Jesse took the basket with almost trembling fingers. Before to-day he would have felt in a seventh heaven of bliss to be able to render this slight service; now he was glad, indeed, but as a servant might be glad to carry for his lord.

"You ought not to walk alone, Miss Kestell," he said after a long silence, wondering at her courage, and fearful for her safety, though he knew not why.

"Who would hurt me? You are thinking of London; but will you tell me one thing now I have the chance of asking you? Do you want Symee very much to come and live with you?"

"I did; but not now. I want her to be happy as long as possible. With me, she would have to accept my sorrow and that of many others."

"It is very sweet to share the sorrow of those we love. I think Symee would find it so after a time."

"No; I could not bear her reproaches. Thank you, Miss Kestell, but things must take their course."

The cottage was close by, and Amice paused to take back her basket from his hands.

"You will go home," she said, "and not stay out in the damp."

The tone of authority and the womanly thought for his welfare touched Jesse deeply.

"I will, as you say so. Good-night, Miss Kestell, I shall not have another opportunity for thanking you for all your kind words and kind deeds. Will you believe that they will be my greatest help and comfort when I am away? I shall know Symee has one good friend."

He gave her back her basket, and was turning away with bared head; but Amice held out her hand, and he took it and wrung it.

"Good-night," she said. "I know about your work in London. Symee tells me about it. Would you care to know that your example suggested many things to me? If we help others we shall be helped ourselves when our own troubles seem the heaviest. I know it; yes, by experience. Good-bye."

She turned away, and Jesse watched her go swiftly up the cottage-path, watched her knock and enter, and then with a "God bless her!" he turned homewards a little comforted. The earth contained an Amice Kestell, it must then be still sweet to live in.

The next day Hoel, sitting in that most comfortable arm-chair in his most comfortable lodgings, received two notes, both of which surprised him much, and caused him some curious thoughts. He knew the handwriting of one of them, and the postmark of the other told him that it came from Mr. Kestell. He opened this one first in preference to that written by Jesse Vicary.

"Dear Fenner,—I have had another conversation with Vicary, and I find that he is so bent upon accepting your kind offer that I have given up my objections

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to the plan, and I now hope he will find that I am wrong and he right as to the result. I merely write this line for fear he may not have thoroughly understood that I offer no further objections to his accepting the post.

"We are looking forward to seeing you on Saturday. My little girl seems to me to look already brighter and happier. May this be a good omen for you; but remember, I wish her to be quite free.

"Very sincerely yours,

"J. KESTELL."

Hoel opened the other letter, knowing it was the acceptance, and glad that he had succeeded in his plan; but, to his surprise, he found he was mistaken.

"DEAR MR. FENNER,—I am writing a line before returning to London. Circumstances have occurred which oblige me to refuse your kind offer. I am none the less grateful, and if my work can ever be of the least use to you, I shall be glad to employ my small leisure in your service. At present I shall go on in my old quarters, as my sister does not wish to leave Rushbrook, and I have come to the conclusion that most likely she is right. My decision has nothing to do with Mr. Kestell's opposition, and is unalterable.

"Yours most gratefully,

"JESSE VICARY."

Hoel whistled softly.

"Something has happened, all the same. That man is not one to change for nothing. He wishes me to think that Mr. Kestell is not at the bottom of it; but that I decline to do, otherwise I should not have received these notes simultaneously. Strange! What can Mr. Kestell's influence be, that it is able so easily to overturn the will of years? It is monstrous! Why, too, should he take so much interest in those twins? Ah! I forgot—philanthropy; I meant to do something of the sort some day myself; though on the whole, I shall, I fancy, content myself with matrimony. Shall I win Elva Kestell? Yes, I must; she is worth winning. She will look beautiful when——"

Here Hoel lost himself in such a blissful dream of his own happiness, that the affairs of Jesse Vicary slowly faded from his mind, and when they returned, he was inclined to be angry with him, because he knew the editor would smile when he heard that Hoel Fenner's "hidden treasure of a genius" had refused to be brought to light. Which was indeed the case, though Hoel pleasantly turned off the joke by saying:

"Well, you know the world knows nothing of its greatest men; evidently Vicary is one of them."

"Then Acton Birch can have the offer?"

"I suppose so," said Hoel; and there the matter ended.

Symee, too, received a note from her brother, over the contents of which Amice found her weeping bitterly; and it was this note which first made Amice Kestell think strange thoughts, the fruit of which was to alter her whole life. Symee, in her sorrow, allowed her to read it:

"DEAR SYMEE,—Don't be angry with me. Heaven knows I want your sympathy now more than ever. I shall be in London before you receive this. My holiday has no longer any charm for me. I must begin my life over again, and the new foundations must be made; and one only knows how deep I must go before finding a firm place. You will not understand this. I do not wish you to do so, little sister. Do not think I am blaming you; you are right to stay where you are. I have given up Mr. Hoel Fenner's offer; the only bright thing about it is that this will perhaps please you. You begged me so hard to give it up. The reason of this is, however, of no consequence to any but myself. God bless you.

"Your loving brother,

"JESSE."

CHAPTER XIX. BEING QUESTIONED.

"TABULA RASA," the white page which the great bounding heart of youth is so anxious to see filled in with the sweet experience of life and of love. How very easily it expands ready for this beautiful picture to be photographed on it; and then all at once the young discover that the finger which is writing slowly on that soft, easily-impressed substance, is spelling, not the word Joy, but the two syllables Sorrow.

Joy is not a myth, however, though one is sometimes tempted to ask—what is it? Is it to be found in success, in possessions, in admiration, or in love? All in succession answer "No;" and yet every young heart disbelieves, and says, positively: "It is somewhere, and I must find it."

And Elva Kestell's warm, loving heart said very loudly indeed: "Joy is in love, and I am finding it."

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The pair of grey ponies at the door of Rushbrook House pawed impatiently for the time when they might trot off. They appeared to know they were starting on a joyous errand, and were going to meet a lover; and though Elva was also eager to be off, she yet could not start without first saying good-bye to her father.

Mr. Kestell had not been very well lately. It was nothing serious, the doctor said, he "wanted tone;" by which happy expression the members of the faculty cover a large amount of ignorance concerning the diseases of their fellow-creatures, because their minds are so rigidly fixed upon flesh and blood that they smile at the word spirit. If you want tone, you must have a tonic; and so neatly wrapped-up and labelled bottles had been carried by Jones into the study, with as much care as he carried the Bible, before prayers, at night, into the drawing-room. One good of Mr. Kestell's wanting tone was, that his wife revived visibly in order to be able to tell him oftener that there really was nothing the matter with him, and that the doctor was all wrong. Mrs. Kestell, like many invalids, had a rooted objection to any one but herself being on the sick list; so she did all she could to persuade her husband that the best thing he could do was to go to Greystone as usual.

But Mr. Kestell seemed quite glad to be able to rest for a whole week and to enjoy the society of his wife and his daughters; or, rather, of Elva, for every day seemed to make a wider breach between him and Amice. There was no apparent reason for this; but though both knew the fact, no one else noticed anything very different from usual in their intercourse.

Elva entered the study to-day like a strong, joyous, summer breeze, and, at the sight of her, Mr. Kestell's face brightened visibly.

"Papa, I'm off; the ponies are impatient. You must look more like yourself by the time Hoel comes. Suppose you come, too?"

"Three's not company, miss," he said, holding the bright face between his hands; "and so you are a little impatient, too, as well as the ponies. Will he get his answer to-day?"

Elva blushed. That was a good sign, her father thought.

"Are you anxious to get rid of me, papa?" she said.

"I don't want to be selfish, darling; and the more I see of Hoel Fenner the better I like him."

"So do I, papa," and Elva laughed so happily that Mr. Kestell gave a little sigh of relief.

"Then why wait longer before giving him certainty?"

Elva stood up quite straight, looking taller than usual, the dark-grey eyes seemed to light up with a new expression of hope and happiness.

"Because, though I do like him better every time I see him, I am not quite sure if I love him enough; and as he must always be my friend, I want to be quite, quite sure. The other day I read this: 'He that does a base thing for his friend burns the golden thread that ties their hearts together.' I am so afraid of saying 'Yes' to please him before I am quite, quite sure."

Mr. Kestell looked up at his child with a strange expression, which made Elva say quickly, and in a tone a little hurt:

"You don't believe me, papa?"

"Good Heavens, child, of course I believe you; but I am anxious not to keep him waiting too long. It seems hardly fair, I mean——"

"Oh, papa, I do believe the doctor is right. You do want something to set you up again. You are not a bit like yourself. It is ever since — oh, yes, I remember — since that time Jesse Vicary came here. Hoel says that he can make nothing of his refusal, and that there must be some mystery about it which we cannot fathom."

"My dear Elva, remember the ponies; you really must not keep them waiting any longer. Take care when you get to Greystone not to—— I mean Jupiter does not like the train."

"Well, yes, I must go. Good-bye, you dear old dad; take all that bottle of stuff before I come back, so as to be fit society for that clever Mr. Fenner. Isn't it strange he cares about me so much?"

"Not at all strange, child. Now good-bye."

Amice was in the hall, ready to go out into the village. She had a covered basket in her hand; but to those who knew her she seemed paler, more thoughtful than usual, if that were possible.

Elva nodded and smiled at her mother, who looked out of the drawing-room window at her, told Amice to see that there were fresh flowers in the drawing-

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room, and then stepped quickly into the pretty pony-chaise, and drove off. Mr. Kestell stood there watching his darling with loving eyes; and so engaged was he in this occupation, that he did not notice that Amice still remained near to him till he was startled by her voice saying:

"Papa."

He turned round quickly; all the look of joy died out of his eyes, and only an anxious expression remained.

"Well, my dear Amice? I thought you had gone on. The afternoon seems clouding over, and you must be at home when Mr. Fenner comes back."

It was only the expression of his face that altered, the words were as gentle and as kind as if they were addressed to Elva.

"I am going, but I wanted to ask you something, papa; and yet I hardly know if I may?"

It was so rare for Amice to originate a remark, that it was no wonder her father looked surprised. He did more, he turned away from those terrible blue eyes that looked him full in the face.

"What is it, my dear? Make haste; I am very busy this afternoon with accounts."

"What made Jesse Vicary change his mind about Mr. Fenner's offer?"

Mr. Kestell's lips parted, as if he were indulging in a silent sigh of relief.

"You seem to interest yourself strangely about that young man, Amice. I don't think it is quite—quite what your mother would like. The reason of his refusing the offer is, however, perfectly simple. I made him see that to refuse was the wisest course."

Amice looked puzzled.

"He did it of his own free will?"

"Certainly."

"He was very unhappy about it. Papa, I saw him that evening, and I shall never forget his face. It seems to haunt me wherever I go; and I cannot help fancying that, somehow or other, we are to blame for it. Oh, I don't know how; but you know—you know. Papa, don't look like that! Forgive me if I am saying something wrong. If I am wrong I am punished."

Mr. Kestell did not understand Amice's meaning in the least; but he gave her words an interpretation of his own. He looked round to see if his wife was near, or if any servant was about; but no one was there, and he began walking down the steps so as to draw her away from the house. This had the desired effect. Amice followed him down the drive, through the gate, and along the road by the Pools.

"You saw Vicary the last evening he was here," said Mr. Kestell, very slowly; "and pray what did he say to you? Why did you not tell me this before?"

"Because I was afraid to speak. . . ." Amice turned away her head, and added almost under her breath: "It is dreadful to be always afraid."

"Afraid of what?" said Mr. Kestell.

He did not lose his temper; he was very gentle, for he feared to frighten Amice before hearing all she had to say.

"Afraid of the cry of the fatherless, which goes straight up to Heaven. It is powerful, so very powerful."

Mr. Kestell paused close by the pool, whose dark waters, at the upper end, seemed to reflect nothing of heaven. The water had a strange fascination for him; it attracted him as fire attracts and paralyses animals. Sometimes he appeared not to be able to move away from it. He seemed to be saying Amice's last words over to himself, as if to take in their meaning. The two formed a strange picture in the stillness of the afternoon. All was so motionless round them, all except the minds of the father and daughter. Suddenly Mr. Kestell recovered himself as he turned away from the water and grasped his daughter's arm firmly.

"Amice, you have somehow got distorted notions about the truth. Why you should suddenly develope this suspicion about me I know not. I should be very glad indeed to set your mind at rest on the subject of Jesse Vicary, if that were possible. Write to him yourself, and ask him any question you please. I think you will find that I have honestly tried to do the best I could for him. I gave in about this offer of Mr. Fenner, for fear he should mistake my intentions. As to Symee's movements, cannot you see yourself that it would hardly be kind to let the poor girl share a very small income? Now, Amice, what else are you afraid of? Such ridiculous nonsense as you talk is very—displeasing to me. I never find Elva setting you such an example."

Mr. Kestell paused, and this time it was his turn to look straight at Amice, and to see what effect his words had upon her. On her side, Amice only appeared frightened and disturbed. She passed her hand over her forehead as if to clear her

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ideas. Evidently, when she spoke, her mood had changed; she was now deeply contrite.

"Papa, forgive me. I can't explain this feeling which comes over me. There, it is gone now; perhaps your explanation will send it away for ever. Oh, I hope so; I hope so!"

"What do you mean, child? Are you mad?"

Mr. Kestell would not be mollified by his child's evident distress. The two were alone, quite alone, so he could afford for once to speak his mind.

"I hope not; I hope not. I can't be mad; though I sometimes ask myself if this may not be the case. It is so difficult to judge, so difficult. If only I could tell you everything; but you would be angry."

"Tell me everything!"

Amice shook her head.

"It is gone now. There, papa, will you forgive me? I can't think why I dare question you like that. You must be the best judge. I know you will be fair in all your dealings with Symee and her brother. Haven't you been their best friend always? They have both told me so."

"Very well, then, pray remember this, my dear, don't let us hear of this ridiculous nonsense any more. I will think the case over again, and see if I can in any way help Vicary farther. He fancies his present work distasteful to him; he may like to change it. I will think it all over again. And now, dear, go off to your business, and remember, Amice, never mention a word of all this to your mother; it would distress her very much."

Amice seemed gradually to recover her presence of mind; her blue eyes filled with tears; and she heaved a little sigh of relief.

"I hope it will be the last time I shall vex you, papa, I do really hope so. I am so glad you spoke quite plainly to me."

Amice turned away, and disappeared quickly with a brighter, firmer step than usual, and Mr. Kestell walked on slowly along the road leading by the Pools.

Everything was still and quiet, save for the sounds of Nature. A moor-hen now and then splashed along the reeds; the birds, especially the robins, sang songs to the departing year, and showed great pleasure in nipping a stout worm in two; beneath the cloak of song and beauty there is much cruelty—as we are apt to understand the word.

Every step in the law of Nature seems attended with something which revolts our higher nature. Is it that our higher nature sees but very imperfectly? or is it that Nature has no affinity with spirit, and cannot be made to follow the same rules?

Mr. Kestell watched the robin intently till he had finished both halves of his worm, and had returned to his bough to sing a jubilant thanksgiving for his supper. With the spirit of a lawyer he even wondered which best deserved to suffer. Anyhow, it was the robin that received the praise and the good dinner; only morbid enthusiasts would waste their pity on the worm. Then he drew an analogy, which he did not put into words.

"What nonsense!" he said to himself, walking on more briskly. "Analogies constantly fail; they are bound to fail; there are no such things. But this very precaution I took has added to the danger. So Hoel Fenner thinks it strange. But no, he is too much on his own side to wander into the unknown. And Amice! Good God! sometimes I fancy that girl has second-sight; and yet that is impossible. Scotch blood—nonsense! Her grandmother was Scotch. But I don't believe in such things. I expect she is naturally tender-hearted, and she was upset by meeting Vicary. I have done my best for him—my very best. His education cost me every penny of that money. I have kept nothing of it—not a penny. The law is plainly on my side. I—I—— Good Heavens!"

Mr. Kestell leant against the trunk of an old oak-tree, whose leaves fell slowly and very occasionally to the earth.

"Not yet, not yet—it has been safe so long—not yet. Elva must be happy—must be. My darling must never know—never; anything to prevent that—anything or everything."

A MUSICAL PHENOMENON OF THE LAST CENTURY.

We have been hearing a great deal lately about favourite musical prodigies: children who attract immense audiences—far larger than their elders can command—and who are petted, fêted, and caressed, till the public taste wearies of them. Such a child was little Joseph Hoffmann. In his case, the excitement and over-pressure of the brain proved fatal; and, after starring for a season or two, he died, prematurely

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worn out, before his powers could be fully developed.

A happier fate befell another child, whose musical gifts won the wonder and admiration of our great-grandfathers. This was Master William Crotch, afterwards celebrated as an organist and composer. He was the son of Michael and Isabella Crotch, and was born at Norwich, on the fifth of July, 1775. In an old magazine for May, 1779—when the little prodigy was not four years old—we find an interesting contemporary account of him, the more interesting because his future celebrity as a composer could only be prophesied.

His father, we are told, being an ingenious carpenter, had built an organ for his own amusement; and it was owing to this accidental circumstance that the musical talents of his little son, William, were discovered so early. The child's genius might have lain dormant for years, if a Mrs. Lullman, a music-teacher in Norwich, and a great friend of the Crotches, had not played on the organ before little William, and accompanied it with her voice. One evening in particular, about the beginning of August, 1777, the child was sitting on his mother's lap, while Mrs. Lullman played and sang for a considerable time. After she went away, he cried, and was unusually fractious. His mother undressed him, and tried to find out the cause of his cries; but in vain. As she was carrying him to bed, she passed near the organ, and he stretched out his little hands towards it. Mrs. Crotch sat him down to the keys, and he instantly struck them with the greatest delight. He did this for some time; but she only thought it was a child's fancy, and took him off to bed, to all appearance soothed and satisfied. The next morning, after breakfast, while Mrs. Crotch was gone to market, his father put the child to the organ, more from curiosity to see what he would do than anything else. He was astonished to hear him play great part of the tunes, "God Save the King," and "Let Ambition Fire the Mind." The first tune his father had attempted in the child's hearing, but was not perfect in it; the last, Mrs. Lullman had sung the evening before. When his mother returned, the astonishing news of little Billy's performance was told to her. At first, she could hardly believe it; but Billy did not long keep her in suspense. The tunes were played over again, and then the friends and neighbours flocked in to hear, to wonder, and admire. They wisely advised the proud mother to let the child play on according to his own fancy whenever he felt inclined.

He was now two years and three weeks old; and from this time all the musical people and professional performers at Norwich came to the Crotches' house to hear little Billy play. He soon picked up fresh tunes, and, like young Mozart, would strike out little airs of his own in harmony. "It is remarkable," adds the chronicler, "that he never plays discord, neither will he hear it in others without expressing disgust."

The infant phenomenon performed before large audiences at Norwich, and at other places; and about the beginning of November, 1777, he was taken by his mother to Cambridge, where he played on all the college and church organs to the amazement of all that heard him.

About the middle of December, 1778, he arrived in London; but he did not perform in public till he had been heard by George the Third and the rest of the Royal family. He and his mother were presented to the King by Lady Hertford, at the Queen's Palace, on the seventh of February, 1779, and he played on the organ before the Royal party, who were loud in their wonder and admiration at such a juvenile prodigy. On the twelfth, little William further distinguished himself by playing before the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester; and on the twenty-eighth he played on the organ at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, after morning service was over, their Majesties being present.

Having received the magic seal of Royal approbation, little William became the rage of the day and the talk of the town. He played every day in public, between the hours of one and three, at Mrs. Hart's, a milliner's, in Piccadilly, opposite Dover Street. The correspondent, who furnished these authentic details, was one of a "numerous and genteel company who heard little William perform, on Monday, the twenty-sixth April," and gives the following account of him:

"Master William Crotch is now three years and eight months old. He is a lively, active child, has a pleasing countenance, rather handsome, having fine blue eyes and flaxen hair. A large organ is placed about the centre of the room against the wainscot. It is raised upon a stage about two feet from the floor, and a semicircular rod is fixed so as to secure him in

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his seat and separate him from the company. An arm-chair is placed upon this stage, and in it a common, very small matted chair, which his mother fastens behind with a handkerchief to the other, that he may not fall out, for he is wanton, and full of antick tricks in the short intervals from playing. A book is placed before him, as if it was a music-book; and strangers in a distant part of the room may mistake it for such; but it is no more than a magazine, or some other pamphlet, with an engraved frontispiece. This he looks at and amuses himself with the figures in the plate while he is playing a tune or striking into his own harmony. In short, he laughs, prattles, and looks about at the company, at the same time keeping his little hands employed on the keys, and playing with so much unconcern that you would be tempted to think he did not know what he was doing. He appears to be fondest of solemn tunes and church music, particularly the 104th Psalm.

"As soon as he has finished a regular tune, or part of a tune, or played some little fancy notes of his own, he stops, and has the pranks of a wanton boy. Some of the company then generally give him a cake, an apple, or an orange, to induce him to play again; but it is nine to one if he plays the tune you desire, unless you touch the pride of his little heart by telling him he has forgot such a tune, or cannot play it; this seldom fails of producing the effect, and he is sure to play it with additional spirit. After playing more than an hour, he desired to be taken down and to have a piece of chalk. He then entertained himself and the company with drawing the outlines of a grotesque head on the floor. His mother said it resembled an old Grenadier he had seen in the Park that morning. He seems to have strong imitative powers.

"Every trivial incident of such a child ought to be noticed. A lady gave him a remarkable large orange. After looking at it a moment with admiration, 'Ah!' says he, 'this is a double orange.'

"Some have reported that he is humoursome. It is true. He will not always continue playing on in a regular manner during the time allotted for company to see him; nor can it be expected. He is not of an age to be reasoned with, and humanity forbids compulsion. It is, in fact, rather surprising that he can be brought to play every day without growing tired and disappointing company.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury and great numbers of persons of the highest rank, who might have commanded his attendance at their own houses, have kindly condescended to come and hear him; and no day passes without a genteel company of from thirty to fifty, or more.

"The polite mode of conducting this wonderful entertainment, deserves great commendation. No money is demanded. A female assistant waits on the outside of the chamber-door, and receives what you think proper to give. Half-a-crown is the least donation, the apartment being spacious and expensive; but the liberality of persons of rank and fortune has been manifested by presents of valuable books and other things suited to the genius of the child; and the polite attention of Mrs. Hart to her visitors, as they pass to the apartments of Mrs. Crotch, renders the visit still more agreeable.

"We forgot to observe that if any person plays a tune little William has never heard with the right hand, on the organ, he will put a bass to it with his left hand. He will also name any note you strike on an organ or any other instrument, and he always knows if any one plays out of tune."

So far the contemporary account of William Crotch, as an infant prodigy. But, unlike many other infant prodigies, he amply fulfilled the promise of his precocious childhood. We can only give a brief passing glance at his after-career. In 1786, when he was eleven years old, he went to Cambridge, and remained there about two years as assistant to Dr. Randall, the Professor of Music and Organist of Trinity and King's College and Great St. Mary's Church. At fourteen, Crotch composed an oratorio, "The Captivity of Judah," which was performed at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, on the fourth of June, 1789. In 1788 he removed to Oxford, where he studied with a view of entering the Church; but he soon gave up this idea and resumed his profession of music, and in 1790 was appointed, on the death of Thomas Morris, organist of Christ Church. In June, 1794, before he was twenty, he graduated as Bachelor of Music. Three years afterwards he succeeded Dr. Philip Hayes as organist of St. John's College and Professor of Music to the University. On November the twenty-first, 1799, he took his degree of Doctor of Music, composing, as his exercise, Dr. Joseph Warden's "Ode to Fancy," the

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score of which he afterwards published. From 1800 to 1804 he delivered lectures in the Music School, and published a treatise on the Elements of Musical Composition. His oratorio of "Palestine" was produced in 1812, and received with great favour. His fame now had reached its height. About 1820 he was appointed Lecturer in Music at the Royal Institution, and when the Royal Academy of Music was established, he was placed at its head as Principal on June the tenth, 1834. At the installation of the Duke of Wellington as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Crotch composed an oratorio, "The Captivity of Judah," wholly different, however, from his juvenile composition of the same name. It is by his anthems and chants that he is best known. These are characterised by a cheerfulness and a joyous "go" and swing. In his motet, "Methinks I hear the full celestial choir," and in his fine anthem for voices and orchestra, "The Lord is King," there is a hearty, magnificent ring, which is intensely English; no breathings of unrest or disquiet are here. As we listen, we think of the little flaxen-haired child, sitting half-undressed on his mother's knee before the home-made organ, with his face uplifted towards heaven, and his blue eyes aglow with eager ecstasy.

Crotch's last appearance as a public performer was in June, 1834, when he acted as organist for part of the three days' performance at the Royal Musical Festival at Westminster Abbey. It is at Westminster, too, that we may hear some of his best anthems and chants sung to perfection.

His death was as peaceful as his life had been. He died while sitting at dinner at the house of his son, the Rev. William Robert Crotch, who was head-master of the grammar school at Taunton. His death occurred December the twenty-ninth, 1847, and he was buried at the neighbouring church of Bishop's Hall.

Besides the works mentioned, Crotch composed several glees, fugues, and concertos for the organ, a funeral anthem for the Duke of York (1827), and some works on Thorough Bass and Harmony. Amongst our genuine English composers Crotch will always hold a high rank. He was intensely English, no German element disturbed him. He belongs to the good old days of Merrie England, when the culture of mysticism and melancholy were unknown in the history of music.

ACROSS SIBERIA BY SLEDGE.

A SLEDGE-JOURNEY across Asia in mid-winter does not seem to present many attractions for the globe-trotter. And no wonder. It is a rough and uncomfortable journey; and the luxurious modern circumnavigator of the world prefers to take his travels easily and comfortably. Many Englishmen have, of course, traversed Siberia in summer, and have written of their experiences; but Siberia under frost and snow is a wholly different country, presenting an entirely different series of experiences. Mr. Lionel F. Gowing recently made up his mind to return from Shanghai to England across Asia in the middle of winter. He had one companion, Mr. C. J. Uren, who, unfortunately, succumbed to the hardships, and reached home only to die. A narrative of this journey has been published by Messrs. Chatto and Windus, and from this book we propose giving some account of the exploit.

It was one involving the traversing of five thousand miles in a sledge, and, therefore, the vehicle first requires notice. In Siberia the traveller may, for a small fee, obtain the use of a Government sledge; but as this has to be changed at every station, it involves a wearisome amount of packing and unpacking at all hours of the day and night. Therefore, those who have far to go, have much baggage, and have the money to spare, usually buy a sledge for the journey, and sell it when they reach their goal. Our travellers secured a second-hand one for seventy roubles, which looked well enough, but which cost them as much more for repairs en route.

The sledges in ordinary use by Russians are: the "vashok," resembling a large brougham on runners; the "kachovka," an open sledge, built of wood and matting, and with no covering save a piece of matting for snowy weather; and the "povoska," a large, roughly-built vehicle, open in front, but covered in at the back with a canvas hood, lined with thick felt. This last was the kind in which Mr. Gowing's journey was performed. In front was a flat board for the driver's seat, and from that sloped downward to the ground a pair of stout ash-poles, partly to prevent the sledge from overturning, and partly as weapons of offence when collisions occur. To pack such a vehicle requires great art. The packages are fitted in until the pile is built up to the level of the

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driver's seat. Over the whole a thick folding mattress of raw cotton is spread, and a plentiful supply of soft pillows and thick rugs. The hood affords protection from the snow, and for sleeping purposes; and the travellers themselves are encased in sheepskins and furs, with goat's-hair stockings, dog-skin socks, and thick felt boots up to the knees. The baggage included tinned provisions, frozen meats, and a supply of tea and liquor.

For horses, the traveller has to look to the State authorities. He must first obtain a podorozhnaya—an official document which enables the holder to demand from every station-master along the specified route, the use of a certain number of horses at a fixed tariff of payment, and the services of a driver. This permit also entitles the holder to a free lodging at every station along the route, and, if he wishes it, the use of a Government sledge, or carriage, on payment of a small fee.

Unfortunately, there are three kinds of podorozhnayas, which may be called first, second, and third-class, in the order of precedence. The holder of an ordinary permit must give way to the holder of an express or of an official permit; and if the supply of horses at a post-station is limited, he may have to submit to many uncomfortable and irritating delays. A little finesse, such as the experienced traveller soon discovers how to exercise, can do much to obviate these difficulties. The third-class, or private podorozhnaya, costs half a kopek per horse per verst. A kopek is about a farthing, and a verst is two-thirds of a mile; so the charge for two horses is thus about a shilling for every thirty-two miles. One permit will carry a sledge with two or three, or even more passengers, so the cost per head is trifling, so far as the mere locomotion is concerned.

The start was made from Vladivostock, the great naval station which Russia has constructed on the Pacific, at the eastern limit of her vast domain. It is a town of cosmopolitan population, situated at the base of a little range of hills, and on the margin of a magnificent harbour, which could afford anchorage for an entire fleet. It is full of Russian officials; but the trade of the place is nearly all in German hands.

It is not in Vladivostock alone, however, that the Germans are extending their business and setting up their households. After leaving this place, Mr. Gowing tells us, they did not come across a single English house of business until they arrived at the end of the sledge journey in Asia. In the great towns of the Amur, they came frequently upon the stores and branch establishments of an enterprising American merchant, who has his head-quarters at the port of Nikolaevsk. But in all the large towns of Eastern Siberia, German names are to be seen over the principal shops. Sometimes these names are Russianised, but the Teutonic origin cannot be hidden. Thus, throughout the length and breadth of Siberia, the Germans, comfortably settled with their wives and families, are quietly monopolising the bulk of the trade, to the disgust of the Russian residents, whose energy and mercantile ability are not equal to that of their competitors. As a consequence, there is a large and growing importation of German manufactures and produce into Siberia by way of the Amur. Many of the postal and telegraph and other officials are also Germans and Danes.

For, of course, the reader must not run away with the idea that Siberia is an immense desert of ice and snow, peopled only by shivering hordes of convicts and by packs of ravening wolves. There are long tracts of uninhabited country, but there are innumerable busy towns and villages, and many considerable cities.

Blagovestchensk, for instance, is a town almost on the borders of Manchuria, and reached after many days' sledging from Vladivostock. It has eight thousand inhabitants, and in the daily market the travellers saw game, meat, fish, milk, and provisions of all kinds offered for sale in great profusion. The fish had probably been dead for several weeks, but were frozen quite stiff and stacked in threes and fours like rifles on the drill-ground.

Blagovestchensk, the "City of Glad Tidings," is on the banks of the Amur, and is growing rapidly in importance. It has fine, broad streets, along which sledges ply for hire, and presumably carriages in summer. The houses are of wood, but well-built and decorated. There are three churches of considerable architectural beauty; and there is a very comfortable hotel. Here, also, is quite an European community — English-speaking, although not an Englishman among them. There is a boulevard, a public garden, a brewery, and, in fact, all the luxuries of civilisation. From the market-place, thronged with Manchurians and wild-looking Asiatics, the travellers passed with a hospitable Dane into the interior

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of what seemed a tasteful and comfortable London villa. The Europeans living here are enthusiastic in praise of their place of residence, and have no wish to leave it. People who have been accustomed to think of Siberia as a land of horror and hunger, will doubtless be surprised to learn that there are cultured German and Danish men and women who prefer it to their own countries.

Yet the cold in December was intense; in the early morning the thermometer registering twenty-seven Réaumur, or twenty-eight below zero, Fahrenheit. But while cold, the clear air was wonderfully bracing.

Going westward from Blagovestchensk, the next important city reached is Nerchinsk, the ancient capital of the Trans-Baikal Province, and one of the oldest Russian towns in Eastern Siberia. It is not so progressive as some of the more modern towns, but is remarkable as the place of residence of the great Siberian millionaire and philanthropist, Monsieur Bootin. This gentleman has so many gold mines, that it is popularly believed that he presses nuggets as parting-gifts upon all his visitors. Here, in Nerchinsk, away in "the wilds" of Asia, as we are accustomed to think, he has a magnificent palace — a bewildering combination of battlemented walls, Gothic windows, Renaissance gateways, Byzantine façades, and Arab towers, all in white stone. This enormous pile towers over the town. In the interior there is a sumptuous dwelling-house, magnificent salons, a theatre, a printing-office, shops, offices, warehouses, and a vast library and museum. There is also a beautiful garden adorned with statuary and fountains, artificial grottoes, conservatories, etc., on the most resplendent scale.

But the real Paris of Siberia is still more to the westward—Irkutsk. The approach by long miles of log-house streets does not look very Parisian, it is true; but these lead to the heart of the city, where the houses are imposing, and the evidences of wealth abundant.

"Suddenly," says Mr. Gowing, "we turned a corner, and found ourselves in the midst of a scene of civilisation such as we had not witnessed since setting foot on Russian soil. Lofty, well-built houses of brick and stone skirted the broad road; and behind the plate-glass windows of fine shops were exposed goods of every kind, almost as rich and as diversified as one may see in any great city of western Europe. Sledges with beautiful, well-groomed horses and glittering harness were galloping along the road; and ladies paced the side-walks dressed in furs, of designs which showed the Parisian fashions are not neglected by the mantle-makers of Irkutsk. Soon we turned a corner, and pulled up in the courtyard of the Russian hotel. It was a large, though not a very comfortable or well-provided hostelry; but its accommodation was palatial compared with that to which we had been for weeks accustomed; and though we subsequently discovered that Irkutsk boasts in the 'Moscow' an hotel which would do little discredit to Paris or London, we did not trouble to shift our quarters."

Irkutsk now presents few traces of the great fire which laid it low ten years ago, and which rendered homeless—fortunately in the summer time—twenty thousand out of its then thirty-four thousand inhabitants. From the river Angara, on which it stands, the city presents a striking appearance, with its countless spires and pointed domes. Although the mean temperature is below freezing-point, there are technical and military schools and colleges, a theatre, a museum, an institute for the daughters of noblemen, a School of Arts, and an active Geographical Society. It is the centre of intellectual and social life in the centre of Asiatic Russia; but two-thirds of its inhabitants are exiled Poles or their descendants.

And now for something of the reverse of the medal of Siberian travel; for it is not all through luxurious cities and amid the comfortable houses of hospitable Europeans.

At first it seems delightful in the bright sunshine. "The exhilarating sensation of gliding over a smooth snow road, with three fresh, high-spirited horses galloping before us, raised our spirits to the verge of exultation, and a sledge journey through Asia appeared to us the most delightful of holiday excursions."

The first trouble is the "bells"—those awful bells, which maddened Matthias and fascinated Poe. But the sledge bells of Siberia are by no means tinkling and silvery. They are as big as an ordinary dinner bell; they vary in number from one to six, and they are not tuned in harmony. To their ceaseless clangour, the traveller by sledge across Siberia must early accustom himself, for he will have three months of it, by day and night, in-

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terrupted only as a town is reached. Before entering any important place, the driver always silenced the clappers.

Then there are the post-stations—or free hotels, whose accommodation the traveller must share, for he has no choice, and where the samovar is often the only comfort.

Indeed, without the samovar, we are told, winter travelling in Siberia would be impossible; so that a word of description is called for. The Russians have the reputation of drinking the finest tea out of China; and Mr. Gowing, a China resident, declares that this reputation is thoroughly deserved. How far this is due to the importation overland, instead of by sea, and how far to the selection by their merchants of the best teas grown in China, is not made clear; but what is undeniable is that the popularity of tea drinking in Russia and Siberia is attributable to the samovar.

This is a large urn, with a receptacle for a charcoal fire beneath and a chimney running right through the centre. The tea-pot is always small, no matter how numerous the party may be. It is the brew which is proportioned to those who are to partake. This is made so strong that a table-spoonful is enough for half a pint of tea when poured into a tumbler and diluted with boiling water from the samovar. The tea is always drunk out of tumblers, generally without milk, and usually with a flavouring of lemon. Whatever betide, one can always obtain, in Siberia and Russia, for a mere trifling payment, a boiling samovar, a tea-pot, and glasses. And no one, who has not travelled by sledge in Russia, can properly appreciate the wonderful sustaining power of good hot tea. Sometimes it is the only thing obtainable at the post-houses.

These last are, one should suppose, the chief bugbear of travellers in Siberia.

The first stage out from Vladivostock gave our friends too favourable an impression of the change-houses with which they were to become acquainted. This one is a wooden building, of substantial size, with a large railed enclosure adjoining for horses. The interior consisted of a principal guest-room, with two smaller rooms, in each of which was a camp bedstead.

This was luxury never seen again in any post-station during the whole course of the sledge-journey across Asia. Most of the guest-rooms are provided with one or more flat, wooden benches, unadorned by cushion or rug, which by no stretch of imagination can be called bedsteads.

The post-stations along the Ussuri were the most primitive. "In some cases, the travellers' room was divided off from the sleeping and dwelling apartment of the station-master and his family merely by a loose, hanging curtain, from behind which crowds of little boys and girls would peer at us as we drank our tea—for nearly every station-master appeared to be blessed with a large family; and, as a rule, boys and girls, mother and father, appeared to occupy a single room, a second apartment being devoted to the use of all the drivers and their families. For the life of an Eastern Siberian Jemshik, or station-master, which may perhaps be taken as a fair type of the life of the lower class—that is, the great bulk—of Siberians, appears to allow of no room for comfort, and but little for decency. Passing at night through the family quarters to the guest-room, as we frequently had to do, we often found the whole bed-less floor covered with the slumbering forms of men, women, and children, the latter very scantily clothed, as, despite the cold without, the huge stove raises the temperature to the verge of suffocation. The sanitary arrangements of the houses, too, defy description. In winter the severe frost is, of course, an excellent temporary purifier; but the fact that infectious diseases frequently prevail in the summer is not difficult to understand."

A few years ago a Siberian post-house was a bye-word in Russia for dirt, discomfort, and parasites of all descriptions. But great improvements have been effected of late years, and the amalgamation of the postal, telegraph, and post-horse services under one department, is expected to be still more beneficial to travellers. In some of the newly-erected stations, guest-rooms are quite spacious, with even some attempt at decoration.

On the Ussuri route, however, the stations are still so bad that Mr. Gowing and his companion preferred several times to pass the night in their sledge rather than in the discomfort and rank atmosphere of the houses. Further on is the region known to Russian travellers as that of the "Seven Cardinal Sins," because of the atrocious badness of seven successive post-stations. Here the discomforts are proverbial, and the impossibility of obtaining even the bare necessaries of life at

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the stations is an old grievance. But we are agreeably surprised to learn that "The Seven Cardinal Sins scarcely deserve to-day their evil reputation. Some of them have surely been rebuilt, for we found them among the roomiest and most comfortable stations we had yet encountered. Food was certainly very difficult to procure; but as in winter one carries his provisions with him, this would have mattered little, but for the fact that we were anxious to make all possible speed, and viands solidified by ninety degrees of frost take time when fires are low to bring into an edible condition. The horses, too, were small and feeble. It was nearing midday when the 'Second Sin' was reached, and we were hungry; but even black bread was denied us, and milk was here an unknown luxury."

As to the cold, extreme as it is, we are assured that the effects are not so terrible in themselves as might be supposed. They are terrible enough when combined with insufficiency of clothing and food, and with great fatigue; but the healthy traveller, who has nothing but the cold to contend with, and who is well supplied with appliances for setting it at defiance, will suffer nothing worse than petty inconveniences and discomforts. Some of the reported effects of the cold are certainly startling enough. It is said that in Mongolia the temperature in winter falls so low that warm water poured from a jug will reach the ground as solid lumps of ice! Siberia is not so bad as that, although rapid effects there are extraordinary.

"Our portmanteaus and bags, though buried in hay and covered over with a thick cotton mattress, could not keep out the cold in the slightest degree, and a mirror, taken from the innermost recesses of a travelling-bag, required half-a-dozen washings before its surface would cease to be dimmed with coatings of ice formed by the vapour in the warm room of the post-station. Over the felt-covered outer doors of the houses one could always observe fantastically-shaped masses of ice and hoar-frost, formed by the vapour produced by the warmth within whenever the door is opened; and we never entered a house except in a cloud of steam."

As to the painful association of Siberia with the sufferings of political exiles and other convicts, Mr. Gowing is unable to speak from his own actual observations. His direct experience on the subject was confined to the meeting of a few convoys of exiles on the road, and to the casual inspection of the outside walls of several prisons. But he carefully collected the opinions of the European residents and others with whom he came in contact, and the general conclusion at which he arrived was, that the stories which used to be related in England of the sufferings of political prisoners in Siberia were hardly at all exaggerated, and that, in fact, it would be scarcely possible to exaggerate them. On the whole, it would seem that Mr. George Kennan has given a much more truthful picture of prison life in Siberia than Dr. Henry Lansdell was able to do, for Dr. Lansdell went under official cover, and the prison authorities, advised in advance of his coming, were always "dressed up" to receive him.

We have not attempted to follow Mr. Gowing's itinerary, with its interesting descriptions of scenery and incidents; we have preferred to take some of the more outstanding features of this remarkable journey.

To sum up. After leaving Vladivostock, Mr. Gowing and his friend travelled five thousand four hundred and seven miles by sledge, and eighty-four miles by tarantas, or springless wheeled carriage. They had sat behind one thousand one hundred horses, and had changed cattle at three hundred and fifty-seven posting-stations. Including short stays for rest in several towns, and more than a week at Tiumen, the journey occupied just twelve weeks, of which time fifty nights were passed in the open air, with the sole shelter of the hood of the open-fronted sledge.

"That there were times, during the later weeks, when we heartily wished ourselves at our journey's end, is frankly admitted. But there is a pleasure in sledging through these vast solitudes, in the arrival at strange towns, in the thousand and one incidents of the journey, of which one does not easily tire; and if one has a fairly vigorous constitution, one can safely disregard, and, with the cold-defying appliances to be had in abundance, even manage to enjoy the rigours of the climate."

KITTY'S VICTIM.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"Kitty, you really have behaved very badly!"

"Yes, Jack."

"I want you to try and realise how

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angry all his people are about it—how very reasonably angry, Kitty."

"Yes, John."

"And, surely, you must see for yourself that it is not—that it is—that—that——"

"Yes, John Julius."

She was standing directly facing him as he sat in his library-chair, turned a little from his writing-table; and behind her, seen through the wide oriel window, a vast expanse of snow-covered meadow and woodland made a curiously still, cold background for the warm little figure, so full of vitality even in its repose. She had uttered her three replies with a serious meekness, which to the uninitiated would have implied the utmost penitence, and every intention of instantaneous amendment. Her attitude, too, was meekness personified, as she stood with her head hanging a little, her eyelids down, the corners of her mouth also down, and her clasped hands hanging loosely before her. But her brother knew her better. Had not that much-tried man felt himself bound, at frequent intervals during the past five years, to endeavour to make some impression on the most feather-brained little mortal ever left to the charge of a sensible, middle-aged man? Did he not know, only too well, exactly how much—or rather, how little—hope for the future he might glean from that supernaturally dutiful and demure demeanour?

There was a short silence, broken only by a deep and much-perplexed sigh from John Faulkner, which was promptly and sympathetically echoed by Kitty. Then the countenance of John Julius, on which he had been endeavouring to preserve a judicial frown, relaxed into the smile which was his normal expression when the object of his contemplation was "the plague of his life."

"Kitty, you wicked little thing!" he said.

"Yes, Jack," more demurely than ever.

"Don't stand there looking as innocent and harmless as a lamb. Come here."

"Come here, Jack?"

"Yes, come and sit here."

"Aren't I too wicked, John Julius?"

As she spoke the words, in the smallest voice imaginable, she raised her eyes. They were dancing and gleaming with fun and mischief; and as they met the perplexed ones with which her brother was regarding her, as if he felt—as indeed was the case—entirely unable to cope with the problem she presented, she broke into a little low laugh of exceeding enjoyment, and with one quick movement perched herself on the arm of his chair, her hands clasped round his neck, and her cheek resting on his grey head.

"Poor old boy," she said, with a comic accent of condolence in her mischievous voice. "I have been rather bad this time, haven't I?"

"Will you promise me not to do it again, Kit?"

He had asked her this question, on an average, certainly once a month in the course of the last two years; but his hopefulness was, apparently, not to be destroyed. At first, she had gaily given the promise as often as he asked it; but repeated experience had taught her that human nature is, after all, but weak, and she answered now with more caution.

"Don't you think, Jack, I'd perhaps better not promise?"

"Why not?"

"Well—you see—perhaps—don't you understand, it isn't that I mean to flirt, it's just that I do it, and then, what's the good of promising? Suppose I say I'll try? Won't that do, Jack? Won't it? Are you angry with me, Jack? Look at me."

She put her two hands under his chin, as she spoke, and turned his face up until it was close to hers.

"I will be good," she went on, "I will, truly. Now let's talk of something else."

"But, Kitty——"

Down went the head, down went the eyes, down went the corners of the laughing mouth.

"Yes, Jack."

"No, Kitty, really——"

"Yes, John," in a tone of serious and intelligent assent.

Then they both laughed, and he gave up the struggle, as usual.

There were fifteen years between that brother and sister; but there was very little of the paternal element about his relations with her. Kitty's mother had died when she was born, and for twelve years her father and her big brother had been her devoted slaves and playfellows; Jack had been victimised and tyrannised over, as if his small sister had been in her twenties, instead of not yet in her teens. Then the father died; and the brother and sister lived on together alone, in the large, old-fashioned country house—lived

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a happy, unconventional life, very popular in the neighbourhood, and always delighting in filling their house with friends.

But, before very long, John Faulkner became conscious of a difficulty, a perplexity, for which, in his innocence, he had been so entirely unprepared, that it was some time before he thoroughly realised whence it arose. Kitty was growing up. He had, of course, expected that she would; though perhaps she had accomplished the process somewhat rapidly. But all girls grow up, sooner or later; and, on the whole, grown up girls were nicer than not grown up girls—though Kitty had been sweet in every stage of her existence. Kitty was extremely pretty. That also was quite as it should be—he liked pretty girls. But —Kitty was an outrageous little flirt.

Now, John Faulkner, though a sensible man enough, had never had any objection to a little flirtation on his own account; in fact, he had rather liked it. But that was a very different matter. To pick up the glove thrown down by a pretty flirt, is one thing. To be responsible for that same pretty flirt, to be made to feel abjectly apologetic to her victim, to be incessantly tormented by anxiety as to what her next proceeding may be, is quite another. John Faulkner, when this new phase of Kitty's developement finally dawned upon him, when brotherly blindness could no longer deceive him, decided with commendable promptitude that the moment had arrived when his authority—the authority at once of elder brother and guardian—must be exerted once and for all. Kitty must not, Kitty should not flirt.

The shock he experienced, the frightful state of confusion into which he was thrown, by the result of his announcement of this decision, is not to be described. His mandate was entirely ineffectual. Kitty continued to flirt. The authority which he had flattered himself was only in abeyance, turned out to be a pleasing fiction. Kitty continued to flirt; or, rather, as she felt her powers develope, Kitty flirted harder than ever.

From that time forth, John Faulkner's cheery, easy-going life became, as he frequently assured his torment, with the deepest pathos, hardly worth living. He existed in a continual state of uneasy expectation of disaster. He regarded his fellow men—such of his fellow men, at least, as came in contact with Kitty—with feelings of mingled pity and self-reproach. He did his best for them; he tried alternately argument, entreaty, and command. It was all in vain. Kitty simply declined to take the question seriously. The more perplexed and harassed he became, the more she seemed to enjoy herself.

This morning's interview had been a repetition of many that had preceded it. He had called her into the library—there was a certain solemnity about the library which he vaguely hoped might be a help to him—in sheer desperation, feeling that something really must be done. Her last escapade had drawn upon him a stately remonstrance from the victim's mother, and he could not, no, he could not and would not stand it. But instead of the new scene which he had rehearsed so carefully — by himself — they had only gone through one of the old scenes over again.

He resigned himself, as usual, with a deep sigh, and being of a sanguine disposition, determined to hope for the best. Kitty proceeded to change the subject.

"What a lot of letters, Jack!" she said, with every appearance of the keenest interest. He fell into the little trap at once.

"There's one from Lindsay," he answered. "He's coming by the 6.15. It's rather awkward, for I'm afraid I shall hardly be back from Blackford by the time he arrives —I must go. If I am not back, will you be a good, serious Kitty and receive him nicely for me?"

"Aren't you afraid, Jack?"

She was very busily engaged in folding her pocket-handkerchief into patterns—much too busily engaged to look up at him—and her serious voice was shaking with mischief. He looked at her for a moment, and then burst into a regular roar of laughter.

"If you only knew him!" he gasped, at last. "Oh, Kit, if you only knew him. No, my dear, you'll hardly believe it, but I'm not in the least afraid, not in the very least."

"Why, Jack, what is he like?" said Kitty, with naïve astonishment.

"He won't interest you, my dear. I wish I thought he would. He's much too —too solid and sensible. I'm afraid you'll find him a little dull. Come, be a good girl, and promise me to be nice to him, for your old brother's sake, even if he does bore you a bit. He's a thorough good sort at the bottom."

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. "What is he at the top?"

"Well—well, at the top there's no denying that he's just a trifle solemn. He's Scotch, you know, very Scotch in some ways."

He looked at her a little wistfully as he spoke. He was really anxious that she should neither laugh at nor be bored by the man he so much liked and respected; and he could not help feeling that either or both these contingencies might possibly come to pass. But one of those sweet impulses which made her so irresistibly charming, which made it so utterly impossible to do anything but condone all her little faults and failings, seized upon Kitty at this moment. She put her arms round him again, and laid her cheek on his shoulder, with a quick little gesture that was inexpressibly sweet and loving.

"Dear old boy," she said, with a pretty seriousness—real this time—in her voice and manner, "I know just what you want, and I'll be the best girl you ever saw. I do plague you sometimes, I'm afraid; and you're a dear! I'll be a perfect angel to your model friend to make it up. There! you never saw anything so good as I'll be."

Five o'clock that same evening found Kitty sitting in state, prepared to fulfil her promise to the very letter, and looking as if the active verb, "to flirt," was unknown in her vocabulary. She had ordered tea in the big drawing-room—an apartment which always had a distinctly solemnising effect upon her—and she had, after much consideration, arrayed herself in a brown-velvet gown, which she had finally decided upon as "quite grandmotherly, and just the thing."

She was sitting, from the same point of view, in a high-backed chair, with her small feet sedately crossed on the fender, when the door-bell rang, and she rose, quickly, meaning to go and meet her guest. But she stopped in much-amused mock perplexity. Would that be dignified? Perhaps she ought to receive him in state in the drawing-room? Which would be most proper. Finally she decided, with a little laugh, that hospitality must always be proper; and she flew out of the room to make up for her delay.

She was in far too great a hurry to see where she was going, in the rather dimly-lighted passage, and before she was aware of his presence, she had cast herself into the very arms of a young man, who was coming towards her, accompanied by a servant.

"I beg your pardon!" she gasped, as she recovered her footing.

"It was my fault entirely," he said, removing the arm in which he had for the moment been compelled to embrace her. Then the ludicrous side of the situation seemed to strike them, and an irrepressible laugh broke from them simultaneously.

"My brother is out," said Kitty, recovering herself with an effort. "He told me——"

She was looking up into the man's face as she spoke, and suddenly she stopped short. Surely there must be some mistake. This could not be the serious friend for whom she had prepared so majestic a reception. (The majestic reception, by-the-by, had certainly been somewhat of a failure.) This was a boy, positively a jolly-looking boy, very little older than herself apparently. What did it mean? Who was it?

Her perplexity entirely deprived her of speech. He stood waiting, evidently surprised at her sudden pause; and matters had apparently come to a dead-lock when another figure came down the passage—a tall man, with a grave, formal manner, who bowed to her ceremoniously, and said:

"I will require to apologise to you, Miss Faulkner, for this inopportune arrival. Had any other train been available, I should most certainly not have dreamt of arriving at a time inconvenient to my friend John."

Kitty gasped. This must be Andrew Lindsay, John's serious friend—this must be the solemn Scotchman for whom she had been prepared; and a fervent thanksgiving arose in her heart that she had not precipitated herself into his arms. But then—into whose arms had she precipitated herself? Who—who in the world was the boy?

With a mighty effort at presence of mind, she held out her hand to the elder man with a smile—a smile which her embarrassment rendered even softer and prettier than usual.

"It is not inconvenient," she said, a little shyly, catching from him a certain ceremony which sat most delightfully on her little figure and fresh young manner. "It is not inconvenient. I am always glad to welcome my brother's friends."

"But I like to know their names," she might have added, as she stole a little glance at the boy. However, neither

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man seemed to think his presence needed accounting for; and Kitty, with an undefined feeling that things might be clearer in a brighter light, led the way into the drawing-room, and proceeded to provide her visitors with tea in a state of the deepest perplexity, which, nevertheless, did not prevent her taking them in in a few quick, shy glances.

The younger man, she decided at once, was "jolly, but rather ugly." He looked very little over twenty, and nature had adorned him with sandy hair, irregular, freckled, good-tempered features, and merry, blue eyes. He had a cheery laugh, too, which broke out on the smallest provocation; and there was something altogether brisk and alert about him which was doubtless emphasized by the contrast presented by the other man.

Andrew Lindsay was indeed appalling, she said to herself, ruefully. Never had she heard any one use such long words; never had she heard any one speak so very, very slowly and deliberately. The temptation to break in and finish his sentences for him was almost irresistible. But why had Jack never told her how very handsome his model friend was, she thought, as she looked up at him when she gave him his cup. What a good face it was, and what beautiful, kind eyes. It really was a pity that he should be so dreadful.

Between the difficulty she experienced in making conversation with the man she did know, and her state of utter bewilderment as to the identity of the man she did not know, she found that tea-party of three the most embarrassing function at which she had ever been forced to assist. She would have found it next to impossible to follow Andrew Lindsay to the end of his sentences, even with a free mind. How could she be expected to do so when she kept discovering herself in the middle of his speeches on the verge of asking that boy—who looked as if he could be so amusing—who he was and what he had come for?

At last, to her unutterable relief, she heard her brother's voice in the hall, and the next moment he was in the room.

"I'm so awfully sorry, Lindsay——" he began.

Then he caught sight of the younger man and stopped short. Andrew Lindsay seemed to think he was waiting for an introduction.

"I have the very greatest pleasure, my dear John," he began, solemnly, in that soft, slow, Scotch tongue of his, which seemed to Kitty to harmonise so exactly with his ceremonious phrases and general gravity of demeanour, "I have the very greatest pleasure in making known to you my brother Norman. It is most truly kind of you to have extended your invitation to him."

Then, in an instant, John Faulkner took in the whole terrible situation. He had understood vaguely, ever since he had first known him, that Andrew Lindsay had a younger brother, who was a sailor. He had known, too, that they had no other near relations, and that, when the sailor was on shore, his home was with his brother.

Through some extraordinary misunderstanding—he afterwards found that a lost letter was at the bottom of it—Andrew Lindsay had understood his invitation to include his brother also. It had been an open invitation for a long visit; consequently for an indefinite period, that boy, with his twinkling, blue eyes and his merry smile would be living in the same house with Kitty—with Kitty, whom, if he had dreamt of the visitor impending, he would have despatched to the other end of England.

He cast one pathetic glance at her as he shook hands with Norman Lindsay, and welcomed him with an effusion born of absolute despair.

She was looking at him with her very wickedest twinkle in her eyes. She had understood his face perfectly, and all her resolutions of the morning were scattered to the winds. Poor old Jack, it was too tempting!

AN OLD-WORLD CONTINENTAL CITY.

ENGLISH and American visitors to Constance are few and far between, in comparison with the numerous tourists of these nationalities who throng every part of the adjoining Swiss territory. And the foreigners who are seen in Constance, as a rule, seem merely going through the place on their way, it may be, to the increasingly fashionable Tyrol, or some similarly-favoured holiday-resort. For Constance is not one of the most enlivening spots on our planet. Indeed, the time spent there would hang heavily on the hands of the tourist who had not, at least, a slight predilection for antiquarian research; but,

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to even the superficial student of the past, the historic little town possesses a charm that is all its own.

Historians, like professors of the healing art, sometimes differ; and they have arrived at varying conclusions respecting the age in which Constance was founded. An ancient chronicler has thus recorded his solution of the difficulty: "The first building of the city of Constance was the work of the grandchildren of Noah, not long after the deluge." We, who are sceptical with regard to this extremely primeval foundation, may yet think it within the bounds of possibility that where Constance now stands a camp was constructed by the Romans early in the first century of our era, when it is believed that they fortified Bregenz to keep in subjection the barbaric inhabitants of the lake district.

Two chronicles, however, agree in saying that Constance is so designated after its founder, Constantius Chlorus, who reigned A.D. 304-306. But this statement is wanting in verification; and, etymologists being as divided in their opinions as are the historians, it is thought not improbable that Constance received its name from some forgotten Roman man or woman; or, again, that the Celtic words, "co"—meaning water, and "stanz"—meaning town, offer the most feasible explanation of the perplexing problem.

Anyway, we know that, founded in some remote time, this city can boast of an ancient lineage, and of having occupied a not unimportant position in European history. The pictures to be seen in its public buildings would alone cause the unread traveller to become acquainted with these facts. To the scholar, written accounts testify that Constance was the seat of a bishopric in the sixth century, and municipally noted two centuries later; and has been honoured by the visits of many imperial celebrities, commencing with the great Emperor Charlemagne, and ending with William the First of Germany.

Reference seems almost needless to the far-famed Council of Constance, designed to reform abuses in the Romish Church, and to determine the rights of anathematising claimants to the Papacy. As is well known, it was this convention which endeavoured to rectify the evils in its church by branding as arch-heretics, and condemning to the flames, the disinterested reformers, John Huss and Jerome of Prague. The Council, certainly, did contrive to depose a man of infamous character from the Papal throne, and elected another Pope in his place; but we cannot consider that it was successful in uniting Christendom under one supreme pontiff, when we read that, some ten years afterwards, the saintly Joan of Arc was asked by the reigning Duke of Milan to decide for him which of the rival Popes was the true one; a request which Joan modestly refused to grant.

The shores of Lake Constance have not escaped the devastating horrors of numerous wars. The most notable event during one of these terrible times was the valorous opposition of the Constance citizens, in 1548, to the attempted reintroduction of the Roman Catholic religion into their midst. Five hundred weaponed, trained, Spanish soldiers were then confronted and totally defeated by a phalanx of fifty butcher lads, on the Rhine Bridge. One of these humble heroes, whose name was unknown, or is no longer remembered, after slaying many a Spaniard, was in imminent peril of meeting with a like fate at the hands of two of the enemy; but, grappling with them in a deadly embrace, he hurled them, with himself, into the rushing Rhine river beneath, thus perishing. No wonder that Constance is proud of this gallant fight, and has publicly commemorated it three times: once by a fresco on the façade of the Chancellery, and again in the two series of historical paintings which decorate the Town Hall and the cloisters of the Insel Hotel.

It is true that, shortly after this intrepid exploit, Roman Catholicism was made the State religion of Constance. It is both true and strange that eighty-five years later — influenced by Austrian rule to favour the Romish faith—the inhabitants of Constance fought, in the Thirty Years' War, against the Swedes and the cause of Protestantism as valiantly as their forefathers had defended the reformed religion.

The scene of this Rhine Bridge Fight, an ancient covered wooden structure, was destroyed by fire so recently as thirty years ago; and the river is now spanned by a painfully new-looking, iron bridge. Constance in other ways also shows signs of having been modernised, and probably will further suffer from what are termed "improvements;" but some, apparently unaltered, old buildings still remain in its streets to charm the eye with their quaint picturesqueness.

In the vicinity of Constance the scenery,

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being devoid of heights, seems comparatively monotonous to a lover of the mountains, and is only suited to the taste of the traveller who admires fertile, cultivated, mildly-characterised landscape. But the active pedestrian, or the patron of carriages, boats, or trains, will find that the environs of the town and the shores of its lake afford several enjoyable excursions to places of historic and archæological interest. Indeed, space would fail to refer merely to the chief of these expeditions. If, however, the Falls of the Rhine have not previously been seen, they should be visited from Constance by way of the Rhine steamer on the Unter See; and authorities appear to recommend all tourists to visit the Castle of Mainau.

This residence which, since the recent eminence of Germany, has often been brought under our notice, belongs to the Grand Duke of Baden. The Castle is romantically situated, amidst luxuriant, English-like gardens, on the rising ground of the diminutive Island of Mainau. From the terrace and windows the views are extremely fine of the surrounding lake and the distant mountains beyond; and the altogether pleasing characteristics of the place cause no reason for surprise that it was a favourite resort of the late German Emperor, William the First. Our cicerone considered that the old Emperor's writing-table and chair were especially deserving of our attention. The table was guarded from further use by a wreath of bay-leaves festooned across the front. The collection of art treasures at Mainau are not calculated to arouse felonious emotions; and we wondered that some of the ancestral portraits had escaped an obliterative accident at the hands of a disgusted descendant.

A pretty legend is told relative to Mainau's past history. Mainau, with other estates, so the story runs, was owned in the twelfth century by a beautiful heiress of the knightly house of Bodman, who was affianced to Hugo of Langenstein, the son of a neighbouring noble family. The day for their marriage had been appointed, when the father of Hugo was ordered by the ecclesiastical potentates of the district to join a company of crusaders, which they were sending to the Holy Land. But the Knight of Langenstein was old, and too enfeebled to obey the summons, and Hugo went in his father's stead. Years passed away, and Hugo returned not. The Lady of Bodman was wooed by many suitors, but she remained constant to her absent lover. Hugo, meanwhile, had been taken captive by the Turks, who offered him his liberty if he would renounce his religion. As true to his faith as his lady-love to her plighted troth, Hugo elected to continue in prison. It was, however, revealed to him in a vision of the night, that a way of release would be opened up if he was willing to forego all thoughts of earthly joy, and to devote the rest of his life to the service of the Church. Hugo thereupon solemnly vowed to become a monk should freedom be granted to him. Not long after this, an opportunity for escape presented itself; and with weary wanderings Hugo at last reached his home. Yet he dared not meet his faithful betrothed. So he sent a message, telling her of his vow, and of his intention to join a band of soldier-monks who were on the eve of departing to fight the heathen. But the noble Lady of Bodman frustrated Hugo's plans by giving Mainau, conditionally that he was made the Master of the Island, to the monkish order of Teutonic Knights.

There seems a likelihood that this narrative might be partially authentic. If so, we may surmise that the donor of Mainau, according to the custom of gentlewomen in those days, resided at her ancestral home, the Castle of Bodman, not far from her lover's abode; and, at times, looking in the direction of the island, perchance she was consoled to know that Hugo, through her instrumentality, had found a peaceful haven.

For nearly half a decade of centuries the Teutonic Knights retained Mainau; and then it passed into the possession of a series of aristocratic owners, finally becoming, as we have seen, a summer residence of the Baden Grand-Ducal family.

The ancient Castle of Bodan or Bodman—as it appears to have been variously termed—situated at the north-western extremity of the lake, is generally considered to be the source from which the name Boden See has been derived. But there is also an idea that this designation may be attributed to the popular belief of past ages that the lake was so deep as to have no bottom ("bodan"). The waters of this vast inland sea wash the shores of Austria, Switzerland, Baden, Wurtemberg, and Bavaria. The inhabitants of these five states, we are told, never allude to the lake as that of Constance, but always speak of it as the Boden See.

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The exhilarating recreation of skating must be a more than usually delightful pastime to the dwellers near the Boden See, when its entire surface—an expanse of about two hundred square miles—is frozen over. Records are said to exist, dating back some one thousand years, which prove that, with the exception of the last century, this event has happened at least once in each of the successive centuries since the ninth. During the fifteenth century the Boden See is stated to have been ice-coated nine times; and it has been so thrice already in our own century.

Memorials of John Huss abound in Constance. At the Insel Hotel—a building that was a Dominican Monastery in the lifetime of the illustrious martyr—the cheerless cell is shown in which he was imprisoned. His sculptured medallion portrait is placed on the frontage of the house where he lodged; and numerous objects associated with his career are exhibited at the Rosengarten Museum.

Few visitors, also, would leave Constance without seeing the place—marked by an ivied granite boulder—where Huss, on his forty-second birthday, in 1415, and his disciple, Jerome of Prague, in the following year, were burned at the stake. Our thoughts again turn to Huss when visiting the Cathedral, where, friendless and alone, he received his condemnation to death at the hands of a unitedly hostile assembly. A stone slab is pointed out here on which he is believed to have stood during his trial, and the exact spot covered by his feet is said to be indicated by a white mark that always remains dry, even when the surrounding portion of the stone is damp—a phenomenon doubtless easily explained on scientific principles. Yet if we entirely discredit the truth of such traditions, we would never willingly part with them; for they so assuredly prove the fact that the individual to whom they relate was considered, by the people of their time or of subsequent ages, to be far above the ordinary mundane mass of mankind.

At the conclusion of the late Franco-Prussian War, the inhabitants of Constance, it is said, hoped that great things in the way of visitors was in store for them. As a consequence, they busied themselves in erecting new hotels for the accommodation of the anticipated influx of eager tourists. But these expectations were doomed to be unfulfilled; and the interest attaching to the little old-world city still centres in the past, and not in present events.

THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

A SERIAL STORY.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "Two and One," "Through Gates of Gold," "Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

From the shelter of some thick shrubs, which grew near the water's edge, a figure stepped out. As the moonlight, struggling through the clouds, touched the man's face, Aston, who had turned sharply at the interruption, uttered a hoarse, inarticulate cry.

It was Charles Wilton.

Or his ghost? He was worn to a skeleton, white and haggard—a mere wreck of a man. But the anger, the contempt that blazed in his eyes were so human that Aston cowered back before it.

"How did you come here?"

"How? You may well ask, thinking, as you did, that I lay hidden there!" with a gesture towards the river. "But Heaven saved me for this—to expose your guilty secrets, and——"

He turned to Daisy; but Aston stepped between.

"I am no murderer, since you are here," he said, with a haughty attempt at courage; "though why you should presume to attach that word to me, when your own drunken folly——"

"You are condemning yourself," said Wilton; and then looking at Daisy: "You shall hear and judge. He wants you to become his wife. He is not fit—yet I heard something that made me think—— For Heaven's sake, don't say you are married to him already!"

"I am his wife. Hush!" Daisy silenced the words on Aston's lips. "I will hear what there is to hear. It is my right."

"You shall not, must not! It is nothing to you or——"

But she motioned him aside with a look in her face that even he did not dare resist. With a sound like a stifled groan, he fell back.

"Be merciful. I loved you so well."

But she turned her face from him.

"He is my husband. Do not say more than I need hear. But I will know what dishonour blackens his life."

"You ought to know, for there is a wrong to right, and you will suffer—since——"

"You shall not tell that," said Aston, hoarsely. "I——"

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"You!" Wilton faced him with bitter scorn. "Have you forgotten that night when——"

And again that significant gesture to the river made Aston grow ashen pale. But he made one last effort.

"Daisy!" he said, "I will right the wrong, only let me tell it to you; only be merciful to me."

"I will be merciful—if I can," said Daisy, in a voice she scarcely recognised as her own, so strained and hard it was. "But I must know everything now. Only, I will tell you this: I will not forget that I am your wife."

"Heaven help you!" said Wilton. "He is a usurper, a thief; keeping back the rights of others. He is not the owner of these mills; he knows who should be here in his place. Last week I came down here to beg him to right the wrong, as the real owner was in great trouble. He was penniless, and, what was worse to him, he feared a dishonoured name. This man here refused to help him. Then, when I threatened, he tried to murder——"

"I did not," hoarsely.

"That is a lie! And you know it. You left me alone in your office with the brandy which you knew was my curse. You stood out there in the dark, watching me as I yielded to temptation, while waiting for you. You watched me drink more and more, till the madness was on me. Then I rushed out, and you let me go straight to the river, hoping that I should fall over the bank——"

"It is a lie!" But the voice was fainter.

"It is not! And I can prove it. Jane Maddox saw it all. It was she who sent for me to come here to-night. I had a message from her two hours ago; she said she wanted to see me, and told me to wait here. I did not expect to see you; and"—with an indescribable softening in his manner, as he turned to Daisy—"you must hear the end. I am very sorry for you, but right must be done; and the man who has been cheated has done for me what no other would—Anthony Melvin——"

"Anthony Melvin!"

"Yes. He is the rightful owner of the mills and Bridge House. His father was the son of that poor girl who drowned herself from this bridge. James Aston had really married her. The proofs of everything, I say, can be had. He soon tired of her, and bitterly regretted his marriage with a poor working girl. He refused to acknowledge her openly. Then he married the heiress, who lived here as his wife, little knowing how she had been deceived. Anthony, the younger brother, discovered the wicked secret. It was the cause of the last fatal quarrel with his brother. For the sake of the poor, deceived wife, Anthony kept the secret. After his trial, he left the country, taking with him the child of the real wife, who, poor girl! mad with the discovery of her husband's infidelity, flung herself from this bridge. Anthony lived a better life in Australia, devoting himself to the child, whom he called after his mother's name. This child was Anthony Melvin's father. When he grew up, Anthony Aston told him the secret of his birth; but, having become a rich man, he decided not to interfere with the succession of James Aston's other son. He never told his own son. I was his friend, and heard it all from him one day. I know where all the proofs are to be found. When I came to England some years ago, disgraced and ruined in Australia by my miserable self-indulgence, I one day wandered down here to have a look at the mills, whose strange story I knew—and came across this man"—motioning to Aston. "In a fit of drunken imbecility I let the secret out to him. Jane found it out from me, too. He bribed me to keep it. Perhaps I should not have spoken of it now had not it been for Anthony Melvin's present trouble. I have not yet spoken to him; Jane wished me not to. But it was she who kept him in England."

"Oh! Is it possible?" A low cry broke from Daisy; but there was a note of gladness in it.

"I have been laid up since my—accident," with a short, hard laugh, "and Jane had her plans."

A curse broke from Aston.

"I did fall into the river as he intended. I was swept on by the current. Perhaps the water revived me a little, and I made some sort of effort to save myself. I have no clear consciousness of what happened. I was sucked under by the water, then swept on towards the bridge. I struggled and struck out, and was dashed against something that cut my head open; but I remember catching at some overhanging branch, and then nothing more. When I returned to consciousness I was lying on the bank under the walls of the house, and Jane Maddox was kneeling by me. The dawn was breaking. She had bound up my head, and had been administering

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brandy till at last I came to. She had come out to look, and had found me lying there senseless. She waited by me till I could move, then made me get away secretly before any one was about. She told me where to go, and promised to come to me as soon as she could. I have been in hiding ever since, a few miles away from here. I have been at death's door. This is the first time I have gone any distance——"

"Have not you said enough?" Aston, mad with fury and disappointment, broke in at last. "It is sufficient. You have ruined me, and righted your friend. You can go away now. Go!" he said, turning on him with such savage fury that Daisy, with a quick cry, sprang between them.

"Yes—go!" she said. "Tell him at once! Oh! perhaps he has gone away. He was here to-night. Try and find him. Tell him that he is rich and safe, and that he can clear his name. Go!"

Mad with baffled passion, with raging disappointment and bitterness, Aston turned on Daisy.

"Tell me!" he cried, "what are you going to do for me, now that he has all? Will you come away with me to-night? Will you love and obey me as you swore this morning?"

She recoiled before his fierce passion. All the misery and the pain of her situation, all the shame and the horror she felt for him, rushed over her. If she had had time to think—— But she scarcely knew what she was doing. She flung up her hands before her eyes, shrinking back from him.

"Oh! Go away! Let me alone, I—can't bear to look on you——"

Her passionate, sobbing words broke off, silenced by a low laugh, so malicious, so triumphant, so mocking, that the blood curdled in her veins. The two men started and turned. They were all three standing close to the foot of the little plank bridge spanning the mill-race. They looked up, for on it, faint and mistily outlined, as the clouds again for an instant veiled the moon's face, stood a shape. It was turned to them, and, with outstretched hand, was pointing at Aston. And then it glided forward, stopping at the end of the bridge just above them.

"The curse has worked, you see; at the moment of your greatest joy the cup was to be dashed from your lips. You were a fool, Brend Aston, to think you could baffle the dead man's curse."

"Oh, what does it mean!" exclaimed Daisy, shrinking nearer Wilton and pointing to the misty figure on the bridge. "Is there more? Is there a curse, too?"

Aston turned on her.

"Curse or not!" he cried, hoarse and breathless with fury, "if I may not have you, no other man shall!"

He snatched something from his pocket. The moonlight piercing the clouds at the instant flashed on steel. With a cry the figure on the bridge sprang swiftly down the steps. But she was too late.

There was a tongue of fire, a short, sharp crack, and Daisy fell face downwards on the ground.

The next second Aston was struggling with Wilton in a mad attempt to shoot himself, while Jane knelt by the side of Daisy, and raised her in her arms.

The moon shone brightly down on the white face and closed eyes.

"She is dead!" she cried, in a choked, awe-struck voice.

The words reached the men in their desperate struggle. Aston's grip loosened on the revolver which Wilton was trying to seize. He stumbled backwards as Wilton, too, involuntarily relaxed his hold.

Then how it happened no one ever knew. Perhaps he struck his head as he fell against the planking of the bridge; perhaps what followed was intentional. Jane and Wilton saw him fall backwards. There was a heavy plunge, a choking, gasping cry, and then the black, swollen waters swirled on with their sullen roaring, while the moonlight played on the ghastly ripples which eddied out in widening circles till they broke against the banks.

"Oh, Heaven!" Jane, swiftly laying down the girl's lifeless figure, ran to the river-side. She would have flung herself in to try to save the man she loved, but Wilton dragged her back.

"Run for help!" he cried, and a second later he was in the water, going to the rescue of his would-be murderer. But Brend Aston was past all human help. When he was lifted at last to the bank, he had gone beyond the shadow of the curse.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a year later.

The sleeping sea lay hushed beneath the stars of a summer night. On board one of the great Australian steamers two of the passengers lingered on deck. It was a

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glorious night. The great deep sea, with its mysterious unrest, below; above, the everlasting shining of the passionless stars, while sea and sky seemed to reflect each other's unfathomable blue. There was no sound, save the ripple of the waves as they fell from the great steamer's sides, leaving a long track of foam behind her, and the throb of the mighty engines which were bearing her, with her living freight, to a new home. The air, sweet with salt scents, was warm, luminous with starlight. The girl had laughingly pushed from her head the soft white wrapper her companion had drawn round her, and was gazing up with a dreamy, rapt gaze at the silent, far-off stars. Suddenly some darker thought struck her, and she shivered slightly, drawing closer to her companion. In a second, his arms were about her, and her head was resting against his shoulder.

"Not thinking of that again, Daisy?" he said. "I wish you would forget."

"I try to, Anthony; and I think I shall one day, with you to help me." She smiled up in his face, and he bent hastily to kiss her. They had that portion of the deck to themselves, and the night, too, shadowed them. "But it still comes back at moments even when I am happiest," and she nestled closer to him; "and that moment, as I was looking at the stars, I suddenly found myself wondering what other sights they were looking down upon, and how many sad sights and dreadful sights. Perhaps like that one by the mills——"

She shivered again, breaking off.

"You shall not talk of it nor think of it," with tender authority. Then, with a grave smile, "Remember how bad it is for me. I, too, cannot bear to remember how I found them that night, carrying you into the house, dead, as I thought then. And those horrible days and weeks when you lay at death's door. Oh, my darling! my wife! I think it was almost as bad the first day they let me see you, and I saw such a poor little white thing, who looked as if she were already half-way to heaven!" and he drew her sharply to him, as if the fear of it was still on him, and he would fain hold her fast; "and even now you don't look quite like your old bonnie self."

"Now, don't, Anthony! If you go on like that I shall think I have grown quite ugly," lifting such a lovely little pouting face to his, that the result was inevitable.

"Don't," she said, flushing and laughing. "We have been married three weeks, and you needn't be quite so—so—so very—— you know. We ought to be a staid married couple by this time. Besides, suppose some one saw us. I overheard Mrs. Jones say to-day that it was ridiculous how fond we were of each other."

"Mrs. Jones be——"

Happily Daisy was in time to stop the sequel. He held the little hand prisoner for a second against his lips.

There was a moment's silence, too full of happiness to be broken. Her heart was so tender in its own great contentment, that it was very pitiful for those who had none of it.

"Anthony," she whispered, after that brief pause, "I want you to do something for me. We are so happy," with a tender pleading, as she saw the contraction of his brows, which showed that he knew what she was going to say; "I love you so dearly. You and I have everything. Will not you try to think less bitterly of——"

"He was a base scoundrel!"

"But think of his dreadful fate. And he had been very good to me. Somehow, I think to-night I can forgive him the wrong he did you."

"That I forgave him long ago. It is only his sin against you. Daisy, when I even looked on his dead face I——" He set his teeth.

"Oh, Anthony! Only remember how miserable he was. And then that dreadful woman—she darkened his whole life. I wonder what tie it was that bound her to him? The curse she spoke of? Oh! sometimes I fancy I hear her horrible laugh now——"

"Hush, dear! She will trouble you no more. She did something to atone. Dr. Copland said it was splendid, the way she nursed you while you lay unconscious. After you began to recognise people, she never entered your room."

"I am glad! Oh, it is very wicked of me! But I think I should have gone mad if I had seen her in the room. But I do try to think kindly of her."

"It's more than I do always," exclaimed Anthony, with his face darkening again. "When I think how she used to try and frighten you out of the house by walking up and down those stairs in the middle of the night."

"Oh, but it wasn't always she. I looked out once or twice, and there was no one there."

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gone before. Never had she gone the distance in such a short time. Now she was within sight of the spot, and, though for a moment her eyes became dim from fear and excitement, she noticed that already a crowd had collected; that there were several heaps of broken débris; and that the crowd was thickest at the bottom of the small embankment.

Elva never once thought of herself. She pulled up the ponies, threw the reins to the groom, and ran to the spot.

"The doctor is coming; he is close behind me. Where are the wounded—the——" She could not say those who are killed.

She spoke in vain, however; it was not easy to get through the crowd. The guard and several gentlemen were trying to keep people off.

"They're working hard at rescuing. You see some of them," said an old man near to her.

"The doctor is here," said Elva again, and this time the word acted like a talisman; for when Dr. Pink jumped down from the dog-cart every one made way for him; and Elva, following close behind, was able to get near to the scene of the accident. Now she paused and saw how little she could do. Only the men could work amongst that mass of broken woodwork; and she saw that she was in a crowd of frightened women and children, most of whom were unharmed passengers from the unfortunate train.

All at once her heart gave a leap of intense joy and relief. There was Hoel himself, working with the rest. He was safe, thank Heaven! It seemed like an answer to prayer. She saw him pulling away débris, going on his knees to lift something, then carrying it away with the help of two or three more men. Something—— The crowd told her what it was. "It's a poor lady. They say she's dead, or fainted."

Elva could not keep quiet now. She broke through the crowd, and hurried to the foot of the embankment, meeting Hoel face to face as he was hurrying back. Their hands met; there seemed to be no power of words, save about the suffering.

"The doctor is seeing to her; go and help him. She is a third-class passenger, but a lady, I am sure. I must go back; there are others."

"You are not hurt?" she said, and her eyes, meeting his, said much more. Hoel felt the look, though he did not stop for more than a shake of his head, whilst Elva went on towards the little group which surrounded the lady.

"Dr. Pink, can I do anything? Is she alive?"

Dr. Pink knew Elva well. He looked up, glad to see a lady.

"Thank you, Miss Kestell. Your handkerchief, please; and kindly come and hold this lady's head. I think she has fainted."

Elva did as she was bid, though not without a little shudder as she saw that the doctor was binding up a crushed hand. It was a sight too terrible to look at; so she looked away, determined to do as she was bid, and not give way to her feelings.

The worst was that the accident had taken place in a country spot, with hardly a cottage in sight, and no restoratives at hand except such as the passengers could provide.

"Are there many buried?" asked Elva, as, though she strained her eyes to see Hoel, she was just out of sight of the débris.

"Ten, in all, we fear."

"Dr. Pink—here, you are wanted. Here's a man who must be attended to at once."

Another doctor had arrived now, and there was a case of immediate amputation, so that Elva was left in charge of the lady.

"I must go, Miss Kestell. Here's a drop of brandy in this flask; moisten her lips. Except for the hand, I see no other injury. It may be merely a faint. Do your best. I must go to this other case."

Elva nodded, and, looking up, saw Hoel once again helping to bear a burden. There was a cattle shed in the field close by. She saw that the party went there. She dared not look further.

"A man's true nature comes out in an emergency," she thought, as she bathed her patient's face; "and I—I fancied he was only a literary man. I see I was wrong."

Presently she found all her thoughts were required for her patient, who suddenly opened her eyes, and, gradually recovering consciousness of what had happened, began to cry.

A shout from a little crowd was the next thing that Elva remembered.

"Take care, take care! Merciful Heavens! the top has fallen in!"

Elva had now a few people round her and

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the sufferer, and, as this last was slowly recovering, she rose up and took a few steps down the path to see what was causing the new excitement. She noticed that a huge mass of débris, which had been lying on the edge of the embankment, had now begun to slip. She saw that Hoel, who had returned at that moment, could not avoid the spot. A great bar struck him, and he was completely knocked over. With a cry of horror, Elva bounded forward; nor could she be stopped by several men, who called out to her not to go on.

"Stop, ma'am; you mustn't go that way. It's not safe yet."

"I must go. That gentleman, is he hurt?"

With the agility born of the free, out-of-door life she had led, Elva climbed the steep bank, determined to get round that way. At the top, however, her passage was again barred.

"Miss Kestell—Elva, this is madness," said a low, harsh voice. "Why are you here?"

It was Walter Akister, and Elva felt indignant at the very fact of his being on the spot at all at this moment.

"Mr. Fenner has just met with an accident. I must go and see if he is hurt. Let me go by."

Elva spoke haughtily, and almost passionately.

Walter Akister did not seem to heed her words. He grasped her arms to prevent her progress.

"How can you go into danger like this when there are so many real sufferers to attend to? Wait here, I will go and find out what you want to know."

Mr. Akister's words were further strengthened by an official, who spoke with authority:

"You can't pass here, ma'am. There has been another fall of rubbish. If you want to get past you must go down the embankment and round that meadow. We can't have females here."

Perhaps Walter himself might not have been allowed to go by had he asked leave. As it was, he had safely passed the dangerous portion of roadway whilst the official was speaking to Elva. She saw him running down the embankment on the other side.

She was not going to be ordered, however, or entirely thwarted. She had had too much her own way all her life long. Quickly she turned back, ran lightly down the embankment, and hurried over a gate into a meadow to make the desired circuit. It was five minutes' walking. She never paused, but hurried on, her eyes eagerly straining to catch a sight of Hoel.

At last she reached the gate; several persons were leaning against it.

"Let me go by, please," she said. "Tell me, is that gentleman much hurt who was knocked down? Where have they taken him?"

"There's a sight of people hurt," was the useless answer, and Elva hurried on towards the shed.

Happily for her, Hoel was not inside; and just outside she saw first Walter Akister, then Dr. Pink. They were bending over somebody, but that somebody was sitting on some sawn wood. She at once recognised Hoel Fenner.

"Mr. Fenner, are you hurt?"

Hoel was pale, but there was actually a smile on his face.

"Nothing at all to signify; only my arm broken. It's set already; but I'm afraid I'm useless now — eh, Dr. Pink? Mr. Akister, will you take my place? There's only one more unfortunate to extricate."

Walter looked at Elva. He must have seen the tell-tale expression; then, without a word, he walked away to take Hoel's place; but certainly Miss Kestell never watched his efforts.

"Your carriage is here, I see, Miss Kestell," said Dr. Pink, hurriedly. "Take Mr. Fenner home. I advise his going to bed at once; and I'll come round as soon as ever I can."

"Yes, I suppose I must," said Hoel; "but I'm sorry not to see the end."

"I'm sure, sir," said a railway-man who had come to inquire, "you've done wonders. I'm sorry that 'ere rubbish took to falling so unexpectedly like. The passengers wishes me to express their thanks to you."

Hoel waved his uninjured left hand, and tried to rise. Every one dispersed then to help greater sufferers, and Elva said, gently, and a little shyly:

"Will you take my arm?"

Hoel did so. It was the sweetest moment in his life, he thought. But it was only for a few steps he accepted the offer. He would not let Elva fancy he was taking advantage of her because the situation was interesting.

Just before they drove off, Dr. Pink brought a slip of paper to Elva.

"Will you leave this with Daulington at

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Greystone, and tell him to send this stuff at once."

"It's a bad case, I fear," this Hoel, "and I might have been in the same circumstance."

"Poor fellow; the amputation was the only chance, and I fear he will sink. Mind you rest. Miss Kestell, I must make you responsible for this patient."

Elva nodded her head and drove off carefully. The groom was behind them, so nothing of importance could be said, which was as well for Hoel, for, now he was away from the scene of the accident, he felt a good deal stunned, and he lay back in the carriage and closed his eyes. Elva's heart was too full to say much; and also, now that the excitement and the danger were over, she was not so willing to show what she had gone through.

"Who was the one remaining?" she asked, presently. "Has he been suffering all this time?"

"No, I don't think he's suffering much; but he's blocked in in a most peculiar way. I went once or twice to see what I could do for him; but, seeing he was pretty cheerful, we left him. I think he said his name was Button, and bound for Greystone. He and I were the only passengers for Greystone, so I felt an interest in him; but he said that he was pretty comfortable, and we were to see to the others. He can't move hand or foot, and it seems a miracle he's alive."

"Button? I seem to know the name. I dare say papa will know. He knows the Greystone people better than we do, of course."

"So you drove on when you heard," said Hoel, in a low voice. "I was so much afraid you would—suffer or be hurt by these painful scenes."

"I shall always be glad I came," said Elva. "But you ought not to talk. Am I shaking you? Still, the sooner we are home the better."

"I am quite satisfied with my present circumstances," said Hoel, in his bright way, and yet Elva could not doubt that from his tone the words were true.

She blushed deeply; she could not find a repartee as usual. The injured arm, now in an extemporised sling, occasionally touched her, and seemed to send a strange thrill of pride through her. Courage in a man has the same magic effect on a woman as the exhibition of womanly tenderness to a man. The highest developement of the special attribute of the sex often deceives the opposite gender. A man often does not fully realise that a courageous woman may be infinitely better than one who is easily moved by the sorrow of others; and a woman glorying in the hero, whose courage is palpable, forgets that a lion-hearted man can be very selfish; may, in fact, make a very bad husband.

It was getting dusk when the ponies drove up to Rushbrook House, and the hero of the day walked into the hall, preceded by Elva. At the same moment Mr. Kestell hurried in, having only just heard of the accident.

"My darling," he said, quickly, "thank Heaven you are back with Mr. Fenner. I've only just heard. Don't go into the drawing-room and startle your mother, dear. I will prepare her. Mr. Fenner, what can we get for you? Jones is a capital nurse."

"Don't agitate yourself, dear old dad," laughed Elva, now quite herself, after the refreshing drive. "Mr. Fenner is not very bad, and nearly all the poor people are extricated now. Where is Amice?"

"Not come in yet. I am glad you are not too much upset. Yes, that is right. Dr. Pink will come in, I conclude."

"Yes, poor man, if he can. He will have his hands full. Dr. Roberts and another man are there."

Elva went upstairs, and Jones and Mr. Fenner followed.

"If you prefer coming down, you can lie on the library sofa," she said, and then went into her own room.

She looked into her glass and saw how excited she was; how brightly her eyes shone. She locked her door, and walked up and down, thinking deeply of Hoel. Then, stopping short, she knelt down and laid her head on a chair, and sobbed.

"I am sure now, Hoel. Hoel, I love you," she sobbed. "For better for worse, you are my hero."

The tears were not all happiness. For such a child of freedom as she was, with the love and joy came a feeling of curious regret; for, to love means a great deal of unselfishness, a great deal of giving up of self, and Elva had never yet understood this.

It was an hour later when she softly opened the library door. Jones and her father had been most kind, and had done all that could be done till the doctor came again. Mr. Kestell wanted to telegraph to London, but Hoel would not hear of it. And now he had begged to see Elva for a few moments.

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There seemed to his attentive ears a change in her footstep as she entered. Hoel was lying down on the sofa, covered with rugs. His head had begun to ache a little, and he felt tired out.

There was a shaded lamp put near to the invalid, and, sitting up, he saw Elva coming softly towards him. He thought at that moment she was the most beautiful woman on earth.

"How good of you!" he said, trying to speak as usual, though his voice shook a little. "I expect Dr. Pink will turn up soon, and then I may be exiled upstairs. I wanted to thank you for all you did this afternoon."

Elva sat down in a chair close by; her limbs trembled; and she looked away.

"Don't thank me," she said, trying to speak firmly. "I was so—so afraid for you, that I was obliged to come on. I thought you might have been killed—coming here. I should have been so miserable, as if it were my fault. And instead of that—I—— Mr. Fenner, may I say something? I never believed in you enough. I know now that a critic can be a hero as well."

Elva never gave in in a half way; she was not cautious or calculating.

Hoel's heart beat high now; but he was very anxious to be truly just towards the woman he loved.

"You mustn't think that a mere thing like that makes any difference. Remember, I'm the same Hoel whom you were doubtful about coming for yesterday."

"No, you are not," said Elva, slipping down, and kneeling by the sofa; "you are infinitely a greater, nobler man than I fancied. And—will you forgive me for having doubted it?"

Hoel forgot all about his desperate fatigue, forgot everything but Elva now, and sat up. He had only his left hand to offer, and this very act exhibiting his unusual state of helplessness, touched the woman's heart. Hoel, before this, had wanted just that touch of helplessness which fascinates a woman.

"Don't move," she said, taking his hand in both hers with the tenderness of a mother. "I won't allow it. I wanted only to say one thing."

Hoel looked at her now; there was no mistaking his love and admiration.

"What?" he said, hoarsely; all the tumult and the excitement of the afternoon seemed to return tenfold.

"You won't be able to use your right hand for a long time. Let me be your right hand."

"Do you mean it?—not now, only, but always?" he said, hardly able to bear this scene.

"Always," she whispered, hiding her face on his arm—"always, till death part us."

He jumped up now, nothing could keep him there. He stood up to his full height, and put his left arm round her, so that her head lay on his shoulder, and he kissed her passionately.

"Do you really mean it? Say it again. Elva, say, 'Hoel, I love you.'"

"Hoel, I love you." And she added: "My hero."

THE ROMANCE OF A VEGETABLE.

There used to be a popular acrostic in the days of our youth, the foundation of which is the subject of much speculation. It turned upon two lines of Scott's famous poem, and ran thus:

> Charge, Chester, charge!
> On, Stanley, on!
> Were the last words of Marmion.
> Were I in gallant Stanley's place,
> When Marmion urged him to the chase,
> A word you then would all espy,
> That brings a tear to every eye.

The answer is "Onion," and the speculation which results is: Why does a raw onion make the eyes water?

The Greeks, being aware of this characteristic, called the onion "kromuon;" and when they ate it raw, they prudently closed their eyes.

Shakespeare's players, in the "Taming of the Shrew," knew all about it:

> If the boy have not a woman's gift
> To rain a shower of commanded tears,
> An onion will do well for such a shift,
> Which in a napkin being close conveyed,
> Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.

So did Lafeu:

> Mine eyes smell onions, I shall weep anon.

The fact, then, has been known for centuries; but the explanation only since chemistry came to be applied to matters of common life. The onion belongs to the genus "allium," all the species of which possess a peculiar, pungent, acrid juice, with a powerful odour. The garlic has a stronger smell than the onion; but the onion has more of the volatile oil which all the genus possess.

The constituents which make the genus valuable as food, are: albumen, sugar, mucilage, phosphate of lime, and certain salts.

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is found at the highest accessible point of the mountain of Damarvend, go through a course of training previous to the undertaking, and fortify themselves by eating much of garlic and onions."

The general explanation given of the leek being the emblem of Wales, and worn on Saint David's Day, is this: In 640 King Cadwallader gained a complete victory over the Saxons, owing to the special interposition of Saint David, who ordered the Britons always to wear leeks in their caps, so that they might easily recognise each other. As the Saxons had no such agreed head-mark, they attacked each other as foes, and aided in their own defeat.

There is a more poetic story. It is that Saint David lived in the valley of Ewias, in Monmouthshire, spending his time in contemplation:

> . . . . And did so truly fast
> As he did only drink what crystal Hodney yields,
> And fed upon the leeks he gathered in the fields,
> In memory of whom, in each revolving year,
> The Welshman, on his day, that sacred herb do wear.

Saint David, however, died in 544, and, therefore, it is probable that the leek was a common and favourite vegetable in Wales during his life-time—that is to say, more than thirteen hundred years ago. We are bound to say that there is a more prosaic explanation of the Welsh emblem. It is that it originated in a custom of the Welsh farmers when helping each other in a neighbourly way, to take their leeks and other vegetable provender with them. Now, as the word leek is from the Anglo-Saxon "leac," which originally meant any vegetable, it is probable enough that the Saxons sneeringly applied the word to the Welsh on account of their vegetarian proclivities. We cannot, of course, be sure that the leek was worn as a badge in Cadwallader's time, but we have Shakespeare's authority for concluding that it was worn by the Welsh soldiers at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. The phrase, "to eat the leek"—meaning to retract and "knuckle-under"—is supposed to have originated in that famous scene in Shakespeare's "Henry the Fifth," where Fluellen the Welshman compels Pistol to swallow the vegetable at which he had been expressing such abhorrence. But there is earlier evidence that the leek was regarded as something ignominious in England. Thus in Chaucer:

> The beste song that ever was made
> Is not worth a leke's blade,
> But men will tend ther tille.

We are not going to dwell on the culinary uses of the onion tribe, for these have been exhaustively described already in Mrs. Hill's excellent little work. But a few applications, not generally known, may be briefly noted.

In olden times there was a famous ointment called Devil's Mustard, which was supposed to cure cancer, remove tumours, and so forth. It was a compound of garlic and olive-oil, and had a smell which was enough to frighten away any disease—or else to create one. Then the fair dames of old had a favourite cosmetic for the hands and face, and one also which was used as an antiseptic, which was largely composed of garlic. Leek-ointment, again, made of pounded leeks and hog's lard, was used as a liniment for burns and scalds.

It is said that in India, where dyspepsia is common, garlic is found to be a great palliative. It is in many countries regarded as a sure antidote against contagion; and persons have been known to put a small piece in the mouth before approaching the bed of a fever-stricken patient. Whether it has any real virtue of the kind we are unable to say, but let us hope that it has more than is ascribed to some so-called disinfectants—the power to kill one bad smell with another.

In "The Family Dictionary," popular in our grandfathers' time, there is the following certain remedy for the plague: "Take away the core of an onion, fill the cavity with treacle dissolved or mixed with lemon-juice, stop up the hole with the slice you have cut off, roast the whole on hot ashes so long till well incorporated and mixed together, then squeeze out the juice of the roasted onion, and give it to a person seized with the plague. Let him presently lie down in his bed and be well covered up that he may perspire. This is a remedy that has not its equal for the plague, provided the patient perspires presently." And if it did promote perspiration, one can well believe that it might be curative.

Not only has garlic been reputed as an antidote to the bite of snakes, but also as a cure for hydrophobia, while onions have been claimed as a cure for small-pox, and leeks as an antidote for poisonous fungi. Old Celsus, from whom Paracelsus took his name, as we explained in a previous article, regarded several of the onion tribe as valuable in cases of ague, and Pliny had the same belief. In our own time the onion is held to be an excellent

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anti-scorbutic, and more useful on shipboard than lime-juice in preventing scurvy.

In fact, in all skin diseases, and in many inflammatory disorders, preparations of the onion have a real value. The juice is also useful in stopping bleeding, although we are not aware if it be the case, as was popularly supposed, that a drop of it will cure ear-ache, and that persistent application will remove deafness. There is, however, still a belief that onion-juice is the best hair-restorer in the market, in spite of its disagreeable smell.

It would take too long to mention all the virtues which have been claimed, with more or less reason, for all the members of the "allium" genus. But it is a curious fact that the onion, which relieves dyspepsia and aids the digestion of some, is a certain cause of indigestion in others. It is said that Napoleon, who was a martyr to indigestion, lost the battle of Leipsic through having partaken of a hurried meal of beefsteak and onions. It is a savoury dish, but has worked woe to many. We do not wonder that the old writers declared that onions brought bad dreams—if they were eaten raw or badly cooked at late supper.

It is certainly open to doubt whether the author of "The Family Dictionary" was right in saying that "they that will eat onions daily will enjoy better health than otherwise." What is one man's meat is another man's poison; and certainly there is no article in common use which produces such opposite effects upon the human system as the onion. They have often been found beneficial to individuals in feverish attacks, and yet the malingerers in our garrison hospitals know well how to promote febrile symptoms by a hearty consumption of garlic.

To conclude, let us present the summary of Sir John Sinclair, the author of a "Code of Health and Longevity":

> Onyons in physick winneth no consent,
> To cholerick folke they are no nutriment;
> By Galen's rule, such as phlegmatic are
> A stomacke good within them do prepare.
> Weak appetites they comfort, and the face
> With cheerful colour evermore they grace,
> And when the head is naked left of hair,
> Onyons, being sod or stampd, again repair.

HOUSEKEEPING IN CRETE.

UPON the whole, and speaking from an experience of six or seven serious weeks, I do not think Crete is a country in which a man may be recommended to undergo a spell of housekeeping. I say this even upon the assumption that the man speaks Greek and Turkish like a bilingual native. If he knows nothing colloquially of either of these languages, his trials will be augmented indefinitely.

For my part, I rented a house and furnished it, because there was no alternative if I proposed to stay awhile in the land, and if I declined, as I did, to run the risk of fever or suffocation in the hotel of Canea, the capital. This hotel was not utterly bad. It was really possible to sleep in its beds, though of course they harboured fleas. But after two nights of its atmosphere, and of the noises which, at an absurdly early hour, ascended from donkey-drivers and hucksters to my window, I gave up the resolution to abide in the capital. There was meat, and wine, and bread in the hotel, moreover, and it seemed at first somewhat rash to lift anchor from a harbour which did at any rate afford the bare essentials of life. The Cretan Christian who owned the hotel, and also a store adjacent, shrugged his shoulders when I told him I proposed to reside elsewhere. It was as much as to say: "I wonder where you will go? You may just as well stay and be fleeced by me in a methodical manner, as put your head into the mouth of some less merciful lion."

Indeed, for a moment, he seemed to have all the good sense upon his side. It was only after a day's hard work, and much parley with interpreters and the proprietors of empty houses, that I began to see any chance of the realisation of my singular hopes. But, on the third day, I found myself duly established as the tenant of an elegant little white villa about two miles from Canea. It was as empty as a collector's egg; but that was a difficulty which could soon be smoothed away. And so I spent my first night in the house, sleeping upon a mattress, and covered with a blanket; which articles, over and above my luggage, were my sole rudimentary purchases as furniture. As the house had nothing in the nature of a lock, and as the island was at that time somewhat disturbed by the possibilities of a successful rising against the Moslem rule, it seemed advisable to unpack my revolver ere I unpacked aught else of my possessions. The weapon was accordingly loaded, and set upon the floor; and once I awoke in the night with the fancy that some one

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had entered the house, and was standing over me in the pitchy darkness, with my own revolver levelled at my head.

It is the first step that costs the most effort in affairs of this kind, as in graver matters. When I had proved to my satisfaction that I could sleep in the "white house," as I called it, we proceeded to buy some of what might be termed the luxuries of upholstery.

But I must here explain why I use the word "we." My house did not stand alone. It had a twin. The two houses abutted on the one side upon a rocky lane, which led into Khalepa, a healthy village overlooking the sea; and upon the other side they both faced the snow-mountains of Central Crete, which were here of the most dignified and impressive shapes. The other house was inhabited by a hard-working Christian, who, with his wife and family of two daughters and three sons, were all impressed into my service as cook, housemaid, butler, waiter, and so forth. I was to be dependent upon them for everything. My own house was merely the residence and place of reception. The "we," therefore, includes with myself the boy of the family, who accompanied me upon my purchasing expedition into the foul and, in every way, disagreeable streets of the capital.

We hired a white she-ass to take to town as the carrier of our purchases, and, after an hour's walk, or rather clamber, up and down the stony defiles which separate Khalepa from Canea, we entered the city gate, and began to look about us. I assume that my readers have never been in Canea, and that it will be news to them to know that it is a most comfortless place. The streets are narrow and greasy, strewn with filth, and crowded with men in picturesque diversity of garb, with dogs that fight for a livelihood in the public places, and with mules, asses, and horses. There is constant going, or rather pushing and struggling to and fro while the daylight lasts. But in the evening the gates are shut, and you must be able to satisfy the soldiers on guard that you are a person of some note, ere they will consent to be bribed to let you pass.

Here then we stumbled up streets and down, tarrying opposite this or that shop that seemed inviting, and bargaining ferociously about pennyworths of cheese, and fruit, and vegetables. It was quieter in the street which seemed to be devoted to no purpose except the making and selling of bed-furniture. In the fore part of the many little shops in the street, there were some counterpanes and mattresses in very brilliant covers. Behind, squatting like tailors on a board, sat two or three little merry boys, stitching and prattling at the same time; and by their side the master of the shop, with a shrewd eye upon the labour of his frolicsome apprentices.

I bought another mattress in this street. It was somewhat difficult to arrange about the stuffing of the thing. In my stupidity, I had uttered the Greek for "tobacco" instead of "wool." This had astonished the mattress merchant; but he made no sign. Doubtless he conceived that an Englishman was used to sleeping on tobacco; and though it seemed an expensive practice, he had nothing to suggest in amendment. It was, therefore, only in the nick of time that I prevented the boy going forthwith to purchase the twenty okes—about thirty-five pounds avoirdupois—of Turkish tobacco, which he thought would be sufficient for the purpose. Just fancy what it would have cost! But, certainly, had this misadventure come to a head, I should have thought myself justified in taking my mattress away with me when I returned to England, and paying no duty upon its contents.

There is one article that is quite indispensable in a Cretan larder—oil. It is cheap enough, especially after a good season of olives. But I do not think so highly of it as my friends and neighbours thought. It was all very well to be offered eggs, and fish, and meat fried in it; but when it came to a rice pudding, with as much oil as milk in the dish, I began to protest and plead weakness of the flesh. If there is any reason in the assertion that consumers of an immoderate amount of olive oil are more liable to leprosy than other people, one need not go far to explain why there are so many lepers in Crete. When I visited the lepers' village, by Canea—where there are forty or fifty inhabitants—I found that oil still held a prominent place among the few trifles of sustenance which each leper displayed in his mean little hovel.

You should have seen how excitedly the children of my neighbour, and even my neighbour himself, helped that evening in making my house as reputably habitable as possible, with the aid of our donkey-load of purchases. The house itself was nothing very wondrous as a feat of con-

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struction. It was of two storeys. On the ground-floor was a large room, floored with the naked earth, and also a closet, which might serve for a kitchen. And upstairs were a brace of rooms of equal size, the one connected with the other. It was resolved to consider the lower rooms as abandoned. My residential suite was on the first floor. The bed was, therefore, arranged in the one room, and on the bare boards of the other room were set a table and a couple of chairs, which, together with a vase of flowers, almost completed the furniture of my sitting-room. Nothing could have been more primitive. At the outset, I did not perceive that there was no chimney to the house. But what of that! Was Crete a land of cold winds and rheumatism like the rough North? The country which Jove selected for his place of birth, his marriage, and his sepulchre, was not a country which could be made more genial with the fuel of Cannock Chase.

So I thought at first. But by-and-by there came some blustering March days, with tempests of cold rain, which altered the aspect of affairs. My house was abundantly supplied with windows; but there was not a pane of glass in them. In the daytime, therefore, when I was at home, I enjoyed the most thorough ventilation. And at night I could, if I chose, guard against the nocturnal dews by closing the wooden shutters, which were my only shield against the storm. With the gales of March, therefore, which deepened the snow on the mountains so that black rocks, which had heretofore been free, were now white as the summits, I began to growl at my quarters, and express fears that the very house itself might not be proof against the force of wind which entered it and whistled about my pillow. To remedy the chilliness, the furniture was again augmented. A big tub of earthenware was brought, and set on a tripod of iron in the middle of the apartment. In this rude brazier I burnt during the day so many bundles of olive twigs that at night I seemed to sleep the sounder for the narcotic that pervaded my domestic air.

My more impetuous readers will no doubt fancy that the life I led in this house was deadly dull. But it really was not. The landscape on the southern side was alone enough to keep ennui at a distance, even had I not had books on my table, and English-speaking friends within a few minutes' walk of my door. I never tired of the snow mountains, whether I saw them by day, with the snow melting down them in long glistening lines, or by night, with the glow of the moon or the stars upon them. Their peaks, about eight thousand feet above the sea, were not more than nine or ten miles from my window, so that I often projected an ascent of them when the snow should go; an expedition doomed, however, to fail of fruition. And in the near foreground were their abrupt green flanks, riven with deep defiles, down which the melted snow poured in many a cascade; and there were white villages set on the hill-sides in romantic perches.

There was also the suggestion of sterner things in view from my house. High up among the snows, I could discern two or three burly buildings of a mysterious kind. To the stranger they would have no "raison d'être;" but in Crete they were symbols of terrorism. They were the block houses or forts which the Sultan erected after the revolt of 1866. Previous to that time, the mountaineers, or Sphakiots, as they are called, after Sphakia, their province, had never, since the fall of Candia from Venice to Turkey, acknowledged the Turkish rule. They had kept their proud independence as firmly as in the olden days, when their forefathers succeeded in holding the Romans aloof, though all the island else had yielded to Metellus Creticus. But, in 1866, not without prodigious loss of blood, Turkey pierced the mountain fastnesses, and made the Sphakiots into subjects. And to retain her hold upon these strong, bold highlanders, she raised the block-houses which stare down upon the plains from their cool elevation among the snows for several months in the year. The Turkish garrisons of these block-houses are as little in love with their residence as the mountaineers themselves. It is a life of the most chilly isolation. But, as a stroke of policy, the Sultan has done wisely in setting these padlocks upon the land.

My outlook upon the other side of the house had more of human than scenic interest. This was quite as it ought to have been. I was near a school kept by Greek priests for Christian boys and girls. There was a church adjacent to the school, and in the church a wooden screen of wonderful workmanship and colours. When I pleased, upon an evening, I could go into the church, with other worshippers, and listen to the hearty chants of the long-

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bearded ecclesiastics. It used to be a perpetual source of marvelling to me how the chanters could chant through the nose as they did, and for so long a time. Perhaps it may have been, as an intelligent German has said, that they are habituated to sing with their nostrils closed. Be that as it may, the two sounds are akin, and equally eccentric. The pictures in this old Church —I dare say as a foundation it dated from the time of the Crusades at the latest—were of the sanguinary school: executions and tortures of Saints, such as the Greek church loves. Here was further a canvas of Saint Michael trampling upon the devil—in which the archangel possessed a feminine cast of features; and where Satan was depicted, prone at his feet, as an old man with white hair, naked, except for a girth-band, and having his mouth very wide open to signify his cries of pain under the archangelic infliction. But, for all this atmosphere of blood, the Greek priests themselves were mild, kindly men, and very courteous at salutations. I dare say they knew only enough of the Greek grammar—though, of course, their language was Greek—to set their scholars upon the road of education; but they were none the less amiable for their ignorance.

Besides the priests and the scholars, with wallet of books upon the back, I had fairer solace in the vicinity of some Turkish damsels. I declare I was delighted when I realised that my house was sufficiently near to the house of a Turk for ocular conversation. The master was wont to waddle off to town in the morning, and leave his ladies to look after themselves. I suppose he was not rich enough to keep them under more effectual lock and key. Or, more probably, he was indifferent to their gallantries. The consequence was that, when I opened my shutters on their side— it was at a sufficiently late hour of the morning—I was generally fortunate enough to come under the light of their eyes without loss of time. They were, I judge, infantine little women, with boundless capacity for levity. At any rate, I have never met damsels so free of their smiles, and who could put so many different expressions into eyes of uniform brownness. As for their figures, there was no knowing from externals whether they were fat or lean, shapely or deformed. It was my turn to laugh when they took the air, as they sometimes did, in the green valley at the foot of the acclivity on which my house stood. It was a charming little pastoral nook of country, with big old olive-trees scattered over the sward, and a myriad of flowers among the grass. Perchance a shepherd in blue, with a scarlet turban on his head, a long gun on his shoulders, and a mandoline in his hands, would be sitting in the shade pretending to guard his flocks; and he, too, was as effective an aid to the landscape as the crimson anemones, the blue petals of the mandragora, or the tall, pale asphodels which here abounded.

Hither, then, used to trip and roll my Turkish fair ones now and again, when their lord and master was out of the way. They were in white from head to ankle, and their little feet were wrapped up in I know not what form of cobblery. And the dear creatures were not above letting the "yashmak"—as the flowered muslin which hid the lower part of their face is called—slip away, when they thought we were well within viewing and appreciative distance of each other. I am really sorry to confess my rudeness; but they were such oddities, alike in their reeling gait, their affected little screams at nothing at all, and even in their lack of the chief elements of beauty, once their faces were displayed, that I could offer them no homage more sentimental than an echo of the laughter with which they were wont to greet me. However, as they seemed to like this tribute of notice, it did not matter very much.

Perhaps my readers will be curious about my housekeeping expenses in this Cretan abode. Well, they were not extravagant, although, of course, they were much greater than they ought to have been. For my house, together with the services of my neighbour and his family, who made my bed, cleaned my floors, cooked and marketed for me, I paid but thirty shillings the month. Had I been of Greek blood, I should no doubt have bargained the cost down to considerably less. But to me it did not seem necessary; besides, a struggle of such a kind would have given me congestion of the brain, and put me out of all patience with the dictionary from that time forward.

The marketing was a more important matter. My neighbour's eldest boy—a consummate little merchant, with the trading instincts very thoroughly developed upon him—daily visited the capital, and bought what I wanted, and what he conceived he might buy over and above my needs. And at night time, when he had

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tired of playing with his brothers and sisters, among the vines and barley of our little garden, he entered my house with the wine decanter and the bill for the day. Here is one of his little memoranda:

Milk	2	piastres,	20	paras.
Salt	1	,,	20	,,
Chicken	16	,,	—	,,
Eggs	2	,,	—	,,
Rice	—	,,	20	,,
Charcoal	1	,,	—	,,
Sugar	1	,,	5	,,
	24	piastres,	25	paras.

As the Turkish piastre is worth about twopence farthing, and there are forty paras in a piastre, this day's bill came to about four shillings and sevenpence. But neither bread nor wine appears in it; because, I suppose, enough had been bought on the previous morning to last a couple of days. I offer my readers the bill for their entertainment, and not by any means as a truthful record of the worth of edible produce in Crete. Had I begun to tax my bills, I should have involved myself in endless disputes, in all of which I was likely to come off second best. It seemed better to suffer with resignation, though, of course, the suffering was not very acute.

But I confess that I did demur in this instance to the price of the fowl. It was, perhaps, four times the worth of the creature. To begin with, one might as well term a centenarian a child as call the fowl in question a chicken. It was killed under my own eyes, and its blood was shed upon the vines of the garden; and not all the stewing of all the cooks in the world could have made it aught but the tough piece of flesh it proved to be. I do not know if fowls, like human beings, go grey when they are old; but the chicken of my bill was white, whether from age or abnormality, and there was no doubting that it was so decrepit and weak upon its legs that it ought long previously to have been indulged with crutches.

However, I am not disposed to think harshly of my Cretan home because of these unavoidable little touches of the tiresome. We were good friends—my neighbours and I—in spite of the chicken and other trifles of the like kind. What they thought of me I cannot tell. I dare say they held the same views as a certain Austrian naval officer who chanced to visit a friend of Khalepa, upon whom I relied for some of the solaces of civilisation. This gentleman was much tickled at the idea of a bachelor settling in Crete, as I had settled there. "Just like an Englishman!" said he; "there is not a man of any other nation who would have done it." This was, of course, an absurd statement to make; but, perhaps, the gradations to it were natural enough.

I parted from my house when the spring showed warm signs of waning into summer. By that time the hot sun had melted much of the snow from my mountains. They were, however, still impracticable in the lower valleys; and they were not a jot less beautiful than at first. But, daily, the heat at noon grew more and more vexatious, and lengthened the hours which had to be cancelled from the active part of the twenty-four.

The zephyrs breathed coolly as before upon the stony hills within a short climb of my cottage; but the toil of ascending in search of them intensified every day. With the heat, too, came many insects. My house seemed to generate them spontaneously. There was no shielding my larder from the ants, and no protecting myself from vermin of the worst kind. I became convinced that I had had enough of Crete.

And so, one day, having packed my portmanteau, and replaced my revolver in its case, I once again accompanied a loaded ass on the road between Khalepa and Canea, and said a regretful farewell to my surroundings. It seemed to me much that I had for forty nights slept in a house as open to all the Cretans of Crete as the fields themselves, and that I had not been visited by marauders. The Cretans have been much defamed in the past, or else they have latterly developed sundry very estimable qualities.

KITTY'S VICTIM.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

John Faulkner's sufferings during the weeks that followed might have softened any heart less stony-hard than that of wicked Kitty. They began immediately. Kitty commenced operations that same evening when she came down to dinner looking absolutely bewitching, with a bright colour in her cheeks and a mischievous light dancing in her eyes, and took possession, without further delay, of the youthful and roving affections of Mr. Norman Lindsay.

Her wretched brother's first impulse was

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to send her away; but on second thoughts he felt pretty sure that his little tyrant would decline to go; and it simply never entered his head to insist. He could not very well send his visitor away, nor did he quite see his way to explaining to his brother the perils by which he was surrounded. But to see the victim being lured on to the inevitable end under his own roof! It was really frightful!

Four people shut up together in a country house in the winter, skating, walking, visiting together, sharing a common stock of interests, pleasures, and jokes, very soon become intimate. Before a week had gone by, things had come to such a pass that John Faulkner determined, with a blind faith in his own powers, wholly unwarranted by past experiences, to "talk to Kitty." He did talk to Kitty, with the usual result. Kitty was entirely impervious to reason. He reminded her, pathetically, but somewhat rashly, that only on the day of the Lindsays' arrival she had promised to be good!

She reminded him that Mr. Norman Lindsay had not been mentioned in the bond, and further pointed out what he was unable to deny, that her behaviour to Mr. Andrew Lindsay was irreproachable. Was she not serious politeness itself to him? Was she not even letting him teach her botany; and was it the time of year for botany? she added, looking suddenly at her brother with a little twinkle in her eyes.

Finally, she assured him cheerfully that she wouldn't do it any more, if she could help it; but, if she couldn't help it, he needn't fuss himself in the least. Mr. Norman Lindsay understood perfectly; he was "that sort"—all sailors were. With which enigmatical consolation she hugged him and departed.

Apparently, she found she could not help it; and John Faulkner, instead of accepting the consolation, grew more perturbed in spirit day by day.

The time had slipped away with what Andrew Lindsay characterised as "pairfectly ameezing rapeedity;" and it was now six weeks since the night of the Lindsays' arrival. Andrew Lindsay had protested once or twice against making such a "veesitation," as he called it; but his protest had not been marked by much energy, and had resulted in no active measures.

The winter days were growing short, and it was half-past four, but the lamps had not yet been lighted, and Kitty was sitting on the hearthrug in her own little sitting-room, her small figure lit up only by the dancing flames, waiting for tea, and for her visitors.

Five o'clock tea was a great institution with the Faulkners, and it was an essential part of its general cosiness that they should have it, when they were alone, or had only intimate friends with them, in Kitty's own sanctum, where no one was allowed without special invitation. Before they had been in the house three days this privilege had been extended by their little hostess with much condescension to both the Lindsays.

They had availed themselves of it after their separate manners with proportionate gratitude, and whatever might be going on, whatever might be the counter-attractions even in the hunting and shooting lines, five o'clock never failed to find the three men assembled round her little tea-table: Andrew Lindsay, most polite; Norman Lindsay, most devoted; the unhappy John Faulkner, harassed and helpless to the last degree.

It was a very pretty, quaint, little room, with a wide window-seat, which Norman Lindsay had blessed on more than one occasion; and a big oak fireplace. It was full of the quaint odds and ends of furniture, in which Kitty delighted; not too tidy, certainly, but picturesque and homelike. Her sweet little personality seemed to hover in every corner; and as she sat there on the rug, with one arm leaning on a big oak chair, and her head resting against the soft, shining silk pillow she had pulled down to receive it, she seemed the natural culminating point of all the dainty prettiness about her. She had a book in her hand—a learned-looking book upon botany—and as long as the light lasted she had presented the most delightfully-incongruous appearance as she studied its dry pages with a frown of the utmost gravity and attention. How much was likely to remain in her pretty, curly head of the mass of interesting information and elaborate Latin names she repeated to herself again and again, interlarded somewhat to their mutual confusion with scraps of reflection quite foreign to the matter, was fortunately a problem which concerned no one very closely. Now that the light had gone, she was looking into the fire with a soft, tender expression in her brown eyes, which made them look strangely unlike themselves. The science of botany had apparently ceased to interest her.

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She had not to sit alone for very long. A hasty knock at the door was followed by as hasty an entrance, and, stumbling over chairs and tables in his headlong passage, Norman Lindsay crossed the room and threw first a mass of very wet green stuff, and then himself down on the rug by her side.

"I've got it!" he said, proudly and triumphantly. "Such a business as I've had about it. I was wet through, and nearly in the river for good and all once. Oh, wasn't it cold, just. Fresh water isn't like salt. But I was jolly glad to do it for you, Miss Kitty. The 'Potomagiton Densus'!" proudly introducing the crushed, moist heap to which the generic term "weed" seemed more appropriate than the many and extraordinarily-pronounced syllables with which he had dignified it. "I thought you'd like a good lot."

The "Potomagiton Densus" was a water-plant which Kitty's botanical studies had made her curious to see; but as the middle of December is not exactly the best time of year for making a collection of such specimens, she had thought no more of her wish after her first expression of it. Norman Lindsay had certainly done his best to gratify her supposed desire for "a good lot." It occurred to Kitty, as she contemplated his dripping offering with laughing eyes, that he must have laid the produce of the entire river at her feet. What in the world was she to do with it? She didn't want to hurt his feelings, ridiculous boy; but she really couldn't have all that horrid wet stuff about. She glanced in her perplexity from the "horrid wet stuff" to its much elated donor, and his expression of mingled devotion and self-satisfaction gave her thoughts a fresh turn. It was irresistible! She rose from the rug, and seated herself on a low chair.

"Oh, Mr. Lindsay," she began, apparently overwhelmed with confusion, and touched beyond words by the delicate attention. "Oh, how very, very kind of you! But you shouldn't, you know. I can't bear to take it when I know it has cost you so much trouble. Were you as wet as it is, I wonder? You shouldn't do such dangerous things."

His answer was incoherent, but apparently satisfactory; for, after a good dead of coquetting, Kitty was prevailed upon to accept his certainly bulky, if somewhat dilapidated offering, and finally did so with a gratitude which seemed almost disproportionate, as she immediately made him remove it to the kitchen premises. His return to his place on the rug was succeeded by a short silence. But Norman Lindsay was never quiet for long, and in a minute or two he said:

"Where's Andrew, I wonder—and your brother?"

There was a hardly-perceptible pause before she answered:

"You don't seem able to exist comfortably for a single hour without that brother of yours, Mr. Norman. What do you do when you're at sea? I wonder he doesn't go with you."

"I wish he would," he answered with a laugh. "I miss him most awfully. Miss Kitty, I wish you appreciated him. Oh, yes, I know you do get on together pretty well, considering; but I can see, of course, that you're always half laughing at his long words and his queer, stiff ways."

"He does say funny things," she admitted with a low laugh.

"I know. It's awfully odd. He never seems to have got away from the queer, old-world ways of our old home. He worshipped our mother, and he has never known any other woman—he doesn't like them. That's why he's so awfully polite." He stopped abruptly, with a sudden sense that he was being rather rude, and went on apologetically: "He's lived with books, somehow, not people, though he's a practical man enough in business. But you don't know how downright good he is, Miss Kitty. I couldn't begin to tell you what he's done for me, ne'er-do-well that I am. He is unselfishness itself, my dear, old solemn Andrew."

There was no answer. Whether or no Kitty was prepared with one, before she could have spoken the door opened, and John Faulkner came in, followed by a servant with tea and lights. That he did not groan audibly at the sight of the two figures sitting there alone in the firelight, was due entirely to a positively Spartan effort of self-control. He cast a look of pathetic reproach at Kitty, and looked on helplessly at the proceedings which followed, first with the tea-kettle and then with the sugar-tongs, until he could bear it no longer, and threw himself headlong into the conversation with the utterly irrelevant observation:

"Where's Andrew?"

"I fear I am a little late," said the slow, grave voice, as the door opened quietly. "Miss Faulkner, I must apologise."

He came straight up to her, and put

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something down on the tea-table by her side.

"The 'Potomagiton Densus,'" he said, as simply as if he were speaking his native Scotch. "You mentioned that you required it."

Kitty took the plant in her hand and looked up in his face with a bright colour rising in her cheeks.

"Oh," she said, with a strange intonation in her voice, "oh, thank you!"

Norman Lindsay had apparently been petrified as he stood, his tea-cup half way to his lips, his mouth open, and she had hardly uttered the words before he exclaimed in a tone of the utmost incredulity:

"Andrew! By Jove! The idea! Why, I never thought of your going for it. How—how jolly rum of you! Who'd have thought it. I went for it!"

"That is unfortunate," observed Andrew Lindsay, calmly. "There was no need that you should do so."

"There was no need that you should do so, you mean," retorted his brother, rather hotly.

And then he added, boyishly enough:

"Anyway, I got ever so much more. That's a silly little bit!"

"It is large enough for the purpose. Miss Faulkner would not require a room full of the 'Potomagiton Densus.'"

"Where did you get it? Tell us all about it. Didn't you have no end of a bother? Weren't you jolly wet?"

"It was no 'bother.' I was wet; but it is just of no consequence."

Andrew Lindsay uttered his last answer in his gravest tones, and said no more. He accepted the cup of tea which Kitty offered him, and went and sat down near John Faulkner. Kitty, with the bright colour still in her cheeks, and a strange excitement in her manner, turned to Norman Lindsay; and before the end of the half-hour that followed, every hair on John Faulkner's head would certainly have been standing bolt upright, if its tendency to protest in that inconvenient manner against overwhelming horror and dismay were not the merest fable. For something in her manner, as she turned towards the boy—something he had never seen in it before, had suggested to him a new and most appalling notion. Exactly what it was that had suggested the terrible idea he could not have said. But suppose—suppose that Kitty was not flirting? Suppose she should fancy herself really in love with the boy? Good Heavens! suppose she should want to marry him?

All the terrible dilemmas in which, in his most foreboding moments, this much-tried man had pictured himself involved by Kitty, sank into insignificance before this apparently rapidly culminating crisis. It would be utterly impossible for him to consent—utterly impossible. The boy was a nice, gentlemanly fellow enough; but, still, a mere boy—unformed in character, changeable and restless, and, except for his small pay, entirely dependent on his brother. And then his profession! A vision of Kitty's probable proceedings with a husband always at sea, rose before his eyes! It was wholly out of the question, not to be thought of for an instant. But what would Andrew Lindsay say? How could he ever look him in the face again? Would he not justly say that John Faulkner should have thought of all this before he allowed his sister to encourage the boy? Allowed! Andrew Lindsay had no sister. He would never understand the terrible position. Allowed, indeed! The situation was appalling.

He was sitting in his library the next morning, vainly endeavouring to read anything in the morning paper but various powerful speeches addressed by himself to Kitty, and to himself by the justly irate brother of Kitty's victim, when a little hesitating tap fell on the door. It opened very slowly on his somewhat preoccupied "Come in," and Kitty presented herself.

The moment his eyes fell upon her he knew that the awful moment had actually arrived. Kitty had come to tell him that she wanted to marry Lindsay.

She came in very slowly, with something shy and reluctant about her every movement. She shut the door with elaborate care, keeping her face turned from him as long as she possibly could. When she could no longer pretend to be in doubt as to the security of the fastening, she came towards him very slowly, with her pretty head bent down, evidently conscious of the gaze—almost horrified—with which he was regarding her, growing pinker and pinker with every moment. She came right up to him, and going behind his chair, she began to play with his hair. He could feel that the little fingers were shaking. He did not speak because he had no notion what to say to her, and there was a moment's silence. Then a very little voice said:

"Jack."

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"Yes, Kitty," he responded, with a sinking heart.

"Jack, dear."

"Well, Kitty."

A long pause.

"I've got something to tell to you, Jack."

Another pause.

"It's about—it's about—Mr. Lindsay."

Her voice had become so very tiny that the last word was hardly audible; and turning his head that he might more easily hear her, he caught a glimpse of a sweet little face all flushed and quivering, and a pair of blue eyes very suspiciously bright. The next moment the face was pressed down on the top of his head; and if ever a man was overwhelmed with trouble and perplexity of spirit, John Faulkner, as he felt something moistening his hair, was that unhappy man.

"You—you don't—you don't want to marry him, of—of course," he suggested, with a desperate and entirely unsuccessful attempt at a confident, matter-of-fact tone of voice. How devoutly he wished she would say that she didn't, and how vain and futile he felt his words to be even as he spoke them.

"I—I knew you'd be surprised," murmured the small, tremulous voice to the top of his head. "So am I—dreadfully. But—yes, please, Jack."

Then John Faulkner knew that there was no escape for him, that he must immediately nerve himself for the fray. He blew his nose with much ceremony, and opened the proceedings somewhat falteringly.

"Kitty, my dear," he said, "let us talk about this."

He drew her round on to his knee, still with her face hidden, and went on:

"I know you will be reasonable, dear." How he knew it is a mystery—certainly not by experience. "I'm quite sure you will believe that your old brother would not give you pain for the world, if he could help it; but—but—in short—you see——" Then, with sudden desperation, "Kitty, it's quite impossible," he said.

Kitty lifted her head with a start that nearly sent her altogether off his knee, and stared at him as if she thought he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Jack!" she gasped. "Impossible! Jack, what do you mean? Why?"

Like most tender-hearted men, when they find themselves obliged to inflict pain, John Faulkner tried to take refuge in a passion.

"Kitty, I thought you were more sensible," he exclaimed, with much wrath. "Why? Because the whole thing is utterly preposterous and absurd. In the first place, he is a mere boy, not old enough to know his own mind; in the second, he is not at all the kind of young man I should like to see you marry; and in the third, he is entirely dependent on his brother. And how I am to answer for it to Andrew Lindsay if this affair does the boy permanent harm, is more than I can say. Kitty, I'm ashamed of you!"

During this harangue, which poor John Faulkner had delivered, with his eyes fixed on anything rather than Kitty, but with an energy and fire which were very much to his credit, Kitty had slipped from his knee. She was now standing before him, looking straight into his averted face; and if he had glanced at her he would have been slightly astonished. The look of startled consternation with which she had received his first words had gradually changed to a look of perplexity, which, in its turn, had given way to an indescribable expression in which a little shame and a great deal of mischief, amusement, and relief were inextricably mixed. He did not look at her, however; in fact, he was inwardly congratulating himself on his firmness in not doing so; and, when he come to the end of his oratorial resources, she said, in a little pitiful voice that went to his very heart, and with a little twist of her mouth, which, unfortunately, he did not see:

"Really, Jack?"

"Yes, Kitty, really."

"I mustn't marry Mr. Lindsay?"

"Certainly not."

"It's quite impossible?"

"It's quite impossible, Kitty."

A pause. He dared not trust himself to look at her, and she watched him for a minute or two, with the mischief in her face gaining ground with every second that passed.

"Very well," she said at last, in a very subdued and shaky voice, and with a little sob. "Very well, Jack; then, perhaps, you'll tell him"—sob—"tell him yourself. "I'll"—sob, sob—"I'll send him to you now."

John Faulkner could hardly believe his senses. Was it possible? She had accepted his decision without the faintest protest, and had actually gone there and then to send the victim to him. He could hear his step in the hall even then. Well,

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it would be comparatively easy to deal with him. How much there was in good, sound reasoning after all.

"Now, Norman, my boy——"

But there John Faulkner stopped abruptly. It was not Norman. Was he asleep and dreaming? Andrew Lindsay—Andrew was coming towards him with a face and manner so utterly unlike himself, that John Faulkner could hardly believe the evidence of his own eyes—and they were staring pretty hard, too.

"She will say nothing but that you require to see me," Andrew Lindsay said, eagerly; yes, eagerly and absolutely rapidly. "She insisted on speaking to you herself. John, my dear old friend, will you trust her to me?"

John Faulkner sat in his chair, absolutely petrified with astonishment. For the moment not only his senses, but his very voice seemed to have deserted him. At last he managed to gasp out, with a feeble imbecility not to be described:

"I—I—— What do you — what do you mean, Andrew?"

"She has told you, has she not? You will give her to me, John—Kitty, my dear little Kitty!"

The room was going round and round John Faulkner, and he clutched the arms of his chair despairingly. "His dear little Kitty!" Andrew Lindsay, solemn, serious, sedate Andrew Lindsay talking about a dear little Kitty! Oh, good heavens! One of them must certainly be mad!

Andrew Lindsay seemed to be rather disconcerted at his silence, and apparently thought that he disapproved of the unusually informal mode of his procedure. With a curious struggle for his ordinary ceremonious manner, he said:

"Perhaps I have not expressed myself just as clearly as I would wish to do. I am here, John, to ask your consent to my making your sister my wife."

There was no doubt about it. It seemed to John Faulkner that the world had suddenly turned upside down; but those were unmistakeably the words he heard. Kitty and Andrew Lindsay! Andrew Lindsay, the man of all others to whom he would have wished to see her married, if such a blessed possibility had ever entered his head. Andrew Lindsay in love, and in love with Kitty! And Kitty — Kitty in love with Andrew Lindsay! All his trials and anxieties to end in that? But Norman? What about Norman?

"You!" he gasped at last. "You!" Then he rose impulsively to his feet. "My dear fellow, my very dear old fellow, there is no one in the world I would rather—— I had no idea! I thought—— Andrew, old fellow, we must be dreaming. There is surely some mistake!"

"Yes, Jackie, there is. I think it's yours"

It was the merest whisper, tremulous with mirth through all its demureness; but both men turned in the direction from which it came, as if it had been the report of a cannon. There stood Kitty, with her head hanging down and her cheeks scarlet, and the next instant Andrew Lindsay was standing at her side, with both her hands in his.

"You will give her to me?" he said; and, before he could frame an answer, John Faulkner's small remaining quantity of presence of mind was reft from him by the astonishing spectacle of Kitty's disappearing in Andrew Lindsay's embrace.

"Kitty!"

Kitty emerged—partially.

"I'm very sorry, Jack," she said, with surpassing meekness. "I forgot it was quite impossible. Is it quite impossible, Jack?"

"Kitty, I — Kitty, I'm — I'm utterly astounded."

"Yes, Jack," very demurely.

"Kitty, I—I——"

"Yes, John," with an intonation of intelligent interest.

"Kitty!"

"Yes, John Julius," with the gravest assent.

Then, quite suddenly, the mischief died out of her face, and the mockery out of her voice, and she ran into her brother's arms.

"Jack!" she cried, as she laid a wet cheek on his shoulder. "Forgive me, my dear old Jack. I'll never be naughty again. I cooldn't, you knew," with a pretty imitation of Andrew Lindsay's soft Scotch speech. "Oh, I am happy, I am happy, dear. Oh, Jack, how can he care for such a little wicked thing as I am?"

"But what about——"

"It's all right, Jack. Truly it is."

And, apparently, it was, though it was some time before John Faulkner could believe it, could thoroughly realise that all his troubles were over, that Norman Lindsay's sufferings were so slight as to be hardly perceptible after the first shock of surprise. He was not of a constant turn of mind, and he and Kitty had evi-

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dently understood one another's ways very well indeed. John Faulkner wondered, for some time, what Andrew Lindsay had thought of the proceedings, from which he himself had suffered so acutely. A little judicious fishing on his part convinced him that, from the moment when she welcomed him to her brother's house, anything and everything that Kitty might have chosen to say or do, would have been perfectly good and sweet in the eyes of Kitty's victim.

BEGGING LETTERS.

Few people outside the different societies whose business it is to investigate appeals to charity, know how large a class support themselves by begging through the post. Wealthy personages, and those who have gained a name for philanthropy, may, it is true, form some idea of the number of impostors who make a living by this means; but it is very seldom that they are able to sift the wheat from the chaff thoroughly, and form any clear judgement as to the proportion of genuine cases amongst those which are laid daily before them. Some little time ago the editor of a New York paper published the names and addresses of the wealthiest ladies in the Eastern States of the American Union, with the result that within a year one of the ladies mentioned received no fewer than seven thousand begging letters; while several of the others were inundated with them to almost as great an extent. The seven thousand letters were all from persons entirely unknown to their addressee. The average sum asked for was two hundred pounds; so had each request been granted, nearly a million and a half sterling would have been distributed. This is taking for granted the fact that the despatch of the first remittances led to no further demands from their recipients. In reality, each application complied with would not only have brought forth another from the person relieved, but would have served to spread the name and fame of the sender among the great army of people who care not how they obtain money, so long as they are not called upon to work for it.

The extent to which public personages are pestered in this manner may be gathered from the fact, that the first Emperor of Germany received sometimes as many as five hundred appeals by post in the course of a single day; while two hundred and fifty begging letters a day was not looked upon as anything out of the way. Such an enormous number of requests for assistance, of course, entirely precludes the possibility of giving them proper consideration; and so the numerous genuine cases, which are no doubt included amongst the crowd, are suffered to remain unheeded.

The professional begging-letter writer, who knows his business thoroughly, is perfectly well aware of the futility of addressing his appeals to prominent personages, and devotes his energies to getting up the names of those who may be presumed to be comparatively unassailed in this particular respect. Generally he will work upon some such basis as an invention, which has every element of success but the necessary funds to carry it to a practical issue; or a business which is languishing for want of a small amount of capital. The adept at this profession manages to make a very good thing of it even now, though he looks back with unfeigned regret to the palmy days of twenty or thirty years ago, when the ground was, comparatively speaking, unworked, and when there was no necessity to rack his brains for the constant flow of new schemes which he now finds indispensable to success.

A begging-letter writer who is in a large way of business often employs several secretaries, for fresh handwriting and new phraseology are among the first requirements of his craft. It is needless to say that the post of secretary to a begging-letter writer is one filled by men who have descended to the lowest depths of degradation. They are usually recruited from the common lodging-house, and are frequently men who have once occupied good positions, but through their inability to resist the demon of drink, have sunk to a level in which employment of any kind, except such as calls for honest work, is acceptable. These swindler's tools are not, as a rule, paid regular salaries, but receive a percentage of the sums which they evoke by their appeals. Their employer furnishes them with the names of the people to whom they may write with a chance of success, and gives them hints as to the style upon which it will be well for them to model their epistles. If, for instance, the person addressed is known to have started his business career in some particular town, it will be advisable to write as a citizen of that place. Should he chance to be a Member of Parliament—and legislators are a favourite prey of the

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begging-letter writer — this appeal will profess to emanate from some unfortunate whose home is in his constituency, and who only requires enough money to take him to that part of the country, where he will find himself among friends.

It is a common practice in London to outline a dozen letters addressed to the business establishments of prominent men, instruct some poor wretch to write up appeals from them, worded in his own language, and despatch him to spend a day in calling at the various offices again and again, so that there may be every chance of his being able to deliver his missives, and receive the answer in person. This plan has several advantages.

In the first place there is always plenty of money easily accessible in a large house of business, so it is easy for the person assailed to instruct the cashier to give the applicant half-a-crown or five shillings, and think no more about it. An appeal addressed to his private house, which would necessitate the writing of a letter, with the drawing of a cheque, or sending for a postal-order, would be far more likely to induce investigation of the case; and anything of this nature is of course fatal to the hopes of the begging-letter writer. And this leads to the second obvious advantage of the delivery by hand plan. A message to the effect that Mr. So-and-So will look into the case gives timely warning to the bearer of the letter that his trouble has been in vain, and that it will be well for him to vacate the house from which he dated his appeal.

The address of the prime mover in the affair is never given. It would be far too risky a proceeding; and though no doubt his instruments often find their cupidity roused by the remittances they receive, and pocket them for themselves, they are usually sensible enough to see that it will repay them to keep on good terms with a man who is able to put them in the way of making money with so little effort. Of course, as they become versed in the mysteries of the profession, they are apt to strike out a line for themselves; but as a rule their brains have been so sapped by excess that they are quite unfitted to carry on so delicate a business as that of the begging-letter writer.

A foreign "secretary" is a gold-mine to one of these men. A tale of woe told in lame English, and written in an unmistakeably foreign hand, has a far greater tendency to loosen the purse-strings of the charitable than a similar document couched in the usual form.

A foreigner, too, if his inventive faculty be stimulated by an unscrupulous employer, can weave such tales of service in the field, supported by copious references to personages as distinguished as they are remote, as to excite feelings of compassion in any but the most hardened breast. A calamity which is the means of throwing people out of work, is promptly taken advantage of by the begging-letter writer, who often shows positive talent in the way in which he avails himself of such opportunities. An occasion of this kind will often give scope for the employment of a pamphlet as a means of strengthening the appeal. Articles from the papers, describing the occurrence out of which capital is to be made, are pieced together, an introduction of some kind is scribbled off, the document is printed in the cheapest style, and a copy of it accompanies each letter despatched. The air of reality that a production of this kind lends to an appeal is wonderful; especially is this the case if, by any means, a few words of acknowledgement can be drawn from any prominent member of society. Slips are promptly printed and affixed to every copy of the pamphlet that goes out. The recipients see that this or that Lord or philanthropist has interested himself in the case, and often consider this fact a sufficient guarantee of its genuine nature. It is to be feared that the lack of a few words of the required description from the pen of some notability, often leads to the manufacture of a sympathetic letter which will answer the purpose as well as, or better than, the genuine article.

Bank failures are, perhaps, the favourite stalking-horses of the begging-letter writer. They usually entail such an amount of real distress and suffering, that the bare mention of loss of means in consequence of one is a powerful plea. It may be taken as a rule in connection with these traps for the charitable, that the more specious the plea advanced, the less worthy is it of credence.

Many begging-letter writers would make a far better thing of their pitiful business than they do, if they would only curb their imaginations a little, and weave less heart-rending tales of the sad straits in which they find themselves.

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Published at the Office, 26, Wellington Street, Strand. Printed by CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, Crystal Palace Press.

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